



Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Need

The Right-of-Way Improvements Manual is an on-line resource developed by the City of Seattle to help property owners, developers, architects, landscape architects, and engineers involved with the design, permitting and construction of improvements to Seattle's street right-of-way.

The Right-of-Way Improvements Manual considers, and attempts to balance the access and mobility needs of all users of the street right-of-way: pedestrians, non-motorized vehicles, automobiles, transit, and freight. Procedures and design criteria were developed keeping in mind the critical balance among the following: safety, the preservation and maintenance of roadway infrastructure and utility services, and preserving our environment.

Knowing that all projects have site specific opportunities and constraints, the Right-of-Way Improvements Manual articulates the City's design criteria for street right-of-way improvements and describes a deviation process to achieve flexibility when practical.

1.2 Authority

The Right-of-Way Improvements Manual establishes and documents the policies, procedures and practices for how the City manages physical improvements in the street right-of-way and on public property. It attempts to provide a comprehensive resource for all procedures, standards and guidelines affecting physical changes in the street right-of-way. It replaces the existing City of Seattle Street Improvement Manual (1991, DCLU/SED DR #30-90/91-4).

The Right-of-Way Improvements Manual summarizes the City of Seattle's Land Use Code requirements ([Title 23 of the Seattle Municipal Code](#)) for street and alley improvements and presents specific criteria for design and installation. In addition to requirements, the Right-of-Way Improvements Manual also includes additional resources and guidelines for doing work in the street right-of-way including information on project permitting, construction requirements and street design guidelines. Refer to the chapter summaries in [Section 1.3 Organization](#) for the authority of information in each chapter.

1.3 Organization

The Right-of-Way Improvements Manual is an on-line resource. As such it provides the ability to view, print and link to a wide range of information about making improvements in the street right-of-way. This section summarizes the organization of the Right-of-Way Improvements Manual and the contents of each chapter. A document map is also included for easy reference. The Right-of-Way Improvements Manual is organized as follows:

[The Right-of-Way Improvements Manual Home Page](#): Information about street right-of-way permits begins on the website home page. Here you will find a number of resources and links that are the global navigation of the website—meaning they are available on every page. They include a glossary of terms, online help, frequently asked questions, and contact information for key resources.

[Chapter 1 Introduction](#) provides an overview of the Right-of-Way Improvements Manual purpose and need and defines the authority, roles and responsibilities of the various City departments that have oversight of the street right-of-way. This chapter also includes information on the relationship between

the Right-of-Way Improvements Manual and other regulations and guidelines, as well as a description of the revision process and update schedule.

[Chapter 2 Procedures, Permitting Process and Approvals for Street Right-of-Way Improvements](#) is designed to help navigate the process for preparing permits for street right-of-way improvements. These include resources to guide the applicant through the environmental review, design review or historic district review processes, as well as the steps needed to prepare a permit application. Permit forms and other helpful tools are also included and can be downloaded directly from this site. This chapter also describes the information which must be submitted to request a deviation from street improvement requirements. The information in this chapter constitutes the City of Seattle's official permitting process for work in the street right-of-way.

[Chapter 3 Street Right-of-Way Improvement Requirements](#) summarizes the City of Seattle's Land Use Code requirements (Seattle Municipal Code Title 23) for street and alley improvements. It explains the importance of the various types of street and alley improvements, and explains how to make the best use of this Manual to determine the type and extent of improvements required by the Land Use Code. It describes the specific improvement requirements for different types of streets and alleys in different zones, based on the requirements in the Land Use Code. These requirements are summarized in a series of tables and drawings for easy reference. The information in this chapter constitutes a set of requirements that are officially adopted by the Right-of-Way Improvements Manual Joint Department of Planning and Development (DPD)/Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) Director's Rule # 30-90/91-4.

[Chapter 4 Design Criteria](#) provides technical information and design criteria for specific elements of the street right-of-way, such as grading, pavement type and depth, street tree placement, and utility locations. Design criteria have been established so that streets and sidewalks used by the public and maintained with public funds will meet standards for operating efficiency, and will hold up to long-term use with minimum maintenance and repair. These requirements and criteria pertain to streets and alleys that are under the jurisdiction of the Seattle Department of Transportation. They also pertain to private streets and alleys that will serve development projects. A deviation request from the design criteria in this chapter may be requested from the City of Seattle for certain streets in unusual situations, or for certain development projects for which the requirements or design criteria would be unreasonable. The information in this chapter constitutes a set of requirements that are officially adopted by the Right-of-Way Improvements Manual Joint DPD/SDOT Director's Rule # 30-90/91-4.

[Chapter 5 Construction and Maintenance](#) defines the information needed for working in the street right-of-way including links to Seattle's Traffic Control Manual for In Street Work and the Pavement Opening and Restoration Rules (authorized by Ordinance # 118751).

[Chapter 6 Streetscape Design Guidelines](#) describes design guidelines that may be of interest to project applicants, but do not represent requirements. Many are neighborhood specific, such as Green Street, light rail station area plans and street design concept plans. Others define City programs that apply to street rights-of-way but are not required, such as traffic calming and natural drainage system guidelines.

1.4 Relationship to Other Standards and Guidelines

The Right-of-Way Improvements Manual is one of many resources for a project applicant proposing to do work in the street right-of-way. Information in the Manual is:

- Consistent with citywide regulatory documents such as the [Seattle Municipal Code](#) and [City of Seattle Standard Plans and Specifications](#).
- Consistent with applicable federal, state, regional and local regulatory requirements.
- Consistent with related citywide plans, such as the [Comprehensive Plan](#), the [Transportation](#)

[Strategic Plan](#) and [Comprehensive Drainage Plan](#).

Compliance with certain federal standards including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the [Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices \(MUTCD\)](#) is necessary for all work done in the street right-of-way. The City of Seattle recognizes the [Washington State City/County Design Standards](#) as the basic set of requirements for roadway work in the street right-of-way.

1.5 Departmental Roles and Responsibilities

The City of Seattle is made up of a number of departments. The following have a regulatory and permitting role with regard to the street right-of-way in Seattle:

[Seattle Department of Transportation \(SDOT\)](#) plans for, builds, maintains and operates Seattle's \$8 billion transportation infrastructure. To further the goal to get Seattle moving, the department manages short- and long-term transportation investments that connect the City with the region. SDOT's mission is to deliver a safe and reliable transportation system that enhances Seattle's environment and economic vitality. SDOT is responsible for building, operating and maintaining transportation facilities in the street right-of-way. SDOT also reviews and issues permits to manage the use of the street right-of-way, including permitting improvements to the street infrastructure performed by developers and others agencies. City of Seattle Inspectors are responsible for enforcing the Ordinances; City Specifications; and the Street and Sidewalk Pavement Opening and Restoration Rules. This is to ensure that all construction, safety, and accessibility requirements of a permit are met as approved.

The Seattle [Department of Planning and Development \(DPD\)](#) develops, administers, and enforces standards for land use, design, construction, and housing within Seattle city limits. DPD is also responsible for long-range planning. With regard to the street right-of-way, DPD reviews the scope of street improvements required of adjacent development. DPD also reviews and issues permits for new or revised curbcuts, structural building overhangs, sidewalk cafes, commercial signs, and any shoreline substantial development permits when required for work in the street right-of-way. DPD also oversees the Design and Planning Commissions as well as the Design Review Board.

[Seattle Public Utilities \(SPU\)](#) provides more than 1.3 million customers in King County with a reliable water supply, as well as essential sewer, drainage, and solid waste services for the City of Seattle. To deliver these basic services, Seattle Public Utilities relies on a system of pipes, reservoirs, and disposal and recycling stations. In the street right-of-way, SPU is responsible for drainage facilities and conveyance systems, water facilities (e.g., hydrants) and solid waste services. SPU has permitting and regulatory responsibility for utility services and utility construction work, including water quality certification, water availability certification, side sewer and drainage permit application review and code compliance review.

[Seattle City Light \(SCL\)](#) works to sustain and enhance the community's quality of life by providing excellent energy services to customers and to be the most customer-focused, competitive, efficient, innovative, environmentally responsible utility in the United States. In addition to its generating facilities, SCL is also responsible for building, operating, and maintaining its power transmission and distribution facilities in the street right-of-way in a fashion that is both safe and reliable. SCL is also charged with the responsibility of managing the use of space on its facilities. Customers wanting new or enlarged electrical services or wishing to attach their equipment to SCL's facilities must contact SCL and secure written permissions in advance.

[Seattle Parks and Recreation \(SPR\)](#) is responsible for development, maintenance and operation of over 6,000 acres of property including numerous historic parks, boulevards, open spaces, and recreation facilities. These include community centers, swimming/wading pools, play areas/courts and ball fields. Certain city streets have been officially designated as park boulevards. In addition to providing typical transportation and street right-of-way functions and amenities, park boulevards provide scenic links

throughout the city. Any development project on, or adjacent to a park boulevard must be reviewed and approved by SPR in addition to all other applicable review and approvals.

[Seattle Fire Department](#) responds to fire and medical emergencies, and is dependent upon the capability of the street network to handle traffic flows. The Fire Department reviews proposed street improvements, closures, etc. to identify potential negative impacts on response times. Private roads must be in accordance with Section 503 (Fire Apparatus Access Roads) and Appendix D of the Seattle Fire Code. Plans for building construction are routed from the Department of Planning and Development to the Fire Department's Fire Prevention Division for review of fire apparatus access and other fire code related issues. The Fire Department is also involved with large transportation projects such as Sound Transit Link Light Rail, and the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement project.

[Department of Neighborhoods \(DON\)](#) Office of Urban Conservation oversees Seattle's historic preservation program. The program's primary objectives are to encourage the rehabilitation and reuse of historic properties for public and private use; to promote the recognition, protection and enhancement of landmark buildings, objects and sites of historic, architectural and cultural significance in Seattle; and, to identify, protect, preserve and perpetuate the cultural, economic, historical and architectural qualities of historic landmarks and districts throughout the city.

1.6 Contact Information

Organization Name/Website	Phone
Department of Neighborhoods	(206) 684-CITY (2489)
Department of Planning & Development (DPD) General Information	(206) 864-8600
Seattle City Light General Information	(206) 684-3000
Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) General Information	(206) 684-ROAD (7623)
Seattle Fire Department	(206) 386-1400
Seattle Parks and Recreation General Information	(206)684-4075
Seattle Public Utilities General Information	(206) 684-3000

Additional contact information and resources are located in the [City of Seattle Staff Directory](#), which is searchable by Department, Division and individual staff.



Chapter 2

Procedures, Permitting Process and Approvals for Right-of-Way Improvements

2.1 Navigating the City of Seattle Permit Process

There are numerous permits that the City of Seattle may require for a project being developed that impacts the street right-of-way. A number of City departments oversee permitting, including:

- [Seattle Department of Transportation \(SDOT\)](#) has authority over permits related to any work being performed in Seattle's street right-of-way.
- [Department of Planning and Development \(DPD\)](#) leads and is responsible for Construction and Master Use Permits (MUPs).
- [Seattle Public Utilities \(SPU\)](#) is responsible for approving work that deals with drainage and water infrastructure.
- [Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation \(SPR\)](#) has a series of approvals that are needed when work is proposed on or adjacent to land that they own.
- [Seattle City Light \(SCL\)](#) has authority for overhead and underground electrical facilities in the street right-of-way.
- In addition to City reviews, approvals and permits, many projects require permits or approvals by County, State or Federal agencies.

This section of the Right-of-Way Improvement Manual provides a high-level overview of typical permits that may be needed for work in the street right-of-way. It also includes a worksheet to help the applicant define the specific permits that each type of project is likely to require. As a project gets more specific, it is always necessary to work with a permit specialist at the City to determine the exact set of permits your project will require.

2.1.1 Applying for a Master Use Permit (MUP)

The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) issues Master Use Permits (MUPs) for the City of Seattle. Many types of Land Use approvals are reviewed as part of a MUP, such as:

- platting (subdivision of land);
- departures from Land Use Code development standards (Design Review and variances);
- special approvals for specific uses of land (Conditional Use and Special Exceptions); and,
- reviews under the [State Environmental Policy Act \(SEPA\)](#).

Applications for related [SDOT Street Improvement Permits](#) may be filed at any time during the MUP review. In some cases, applicants may have enough information about street improvements to begin work on the initial stages of a Street Improvement Permit. Generally there is no requirement to file the Street Improvement Permit application prior to publication of the MUP decision as the MUP review may require additional or different street improvements from the improvements typically required by the Land Use Code. For sites which abut multiple street right-of-way (streets and alleys), the MUP may even specify the location of vehicle access point(s) to the site. For more information on MUPs, visit the [DPD website](#). More information on permits, procedures and approvals for MUPs can be found in [Section 2.7 Master Use Permits \(DPD\)](#).

2.1.2 Applying for a DPD Construction Permit

Projects in this category are construction related but may also require street improvements as specified in the Land Use Code or as required by a previous, related MUP. For example, if an applicant is building a single family house on private property that will need a new curb cut across an existing sidewalk. DPD issues permits for curb cuts across existing sidewalks on behalf of SDOT, and will consult with SDOT to determine if other requirements are triggered by the project (e.g., grading, drainage, utility pole or vault relocation).

An applicant may also need a separate Street Use Permit depending on the condition of the street right-of-way. If a project requires street improvements, the applicant will seek issuance of a Street Improvement Permit and will likely need additional Street Use Permits to perform construction (e.g., dumpster and materials storage, sidewalk crossing, crane, concrete pumping). Additional permit types may be required depending on the project type and site conditions that are issued by other agencies. If an applicant is applying for a Construction Permit before a MUP has been approved, be advised that the MUP process review may substantially change the street improvement requirements. If this occurs, the applicant may bear significant expense and additional review time to revise the street improvement application. More information on permits, procedures and approvals for Construction Permits can be found in [Section 2.8 Construction Permits](#).

2.1.2a Initiation of Public Street Improvements

Whenever development occurs under the Land Use Code, there may be requirements for improvements in the street right-of-way. These improvements must meet SDOT design criteria and the [Street Use Section of SDOT](#) is the point of contact to assist an applicant with the design details of the street improvements required by DPD. An SDOT staff member provides project management services and facilitates the approval process for Street Improvement Permits. This includes small, medium, and large scale street improvement associated with private development as well as projects initiated by city, county or state agencies.

When a customer contacts DPD regarding an MUP or Construction Permit, staff evaluates the proposed project using the SDOT Notification Criteria for Pre-Submittal Notification. If any of the SDOT notification criteria are triggered, DPD will inform an SDOT Plan Review Analyst and provide them with a copy of the site plan for the project.

The SDOT Plan Review Analyst will determine whether any Street Right-of-Way Improvement Permits are required after a determination has been made by DPD staff regarding the street improvements required by the City Land Use Code. The Analyst will respond with an Initial Assessment Form (IAF) within 2 business days of attending a pre-application meeting or meeting the applicant in person. Both the applicant and DPD will receive a copy of this form that will state whether or not a Street Improvement Permit is required and if so, the level of review needed. Refer to [Section 2.4.1 Street Improvement Permits](#).

A Street Use Plan Review Analyst may be contacted either at the [DPD Applicant Service Center](#) or at the [SDOT Street Use Section Offices](#).

2.1.3 Applying for a Street Right-of-Way Improvement Permit

The City of Seattle requires a Street Right-of-Way Improvement Permit for work in or use of a street right-of-way, or for excavation near, or opening in, a street right-of-way under SDOT's jurisdiction. There are five basic types of Street Right-of-Way Improvement Permits with varying requirements. These are [Street Improvement](#), [Shoring & Excavation](#), [Utility](#), [Term](#), and [Street Use Permits](#). The types of permits that are of particular interest to those engaged in street right-of-way improvements are explained in this

section. For more information on the various kinds of Street Right-of-Way Improvement Permits, contact the [SDOT Street Use Permit Counter](#) or refer to the SDOT CAM #605: List of Street Right-of-Way Improvement Permits.

If an applicant is applying for a Street Right-of-Way Improvement Permit, the permit can be approved subject to field inspection. For example, an applicant is interested in paving an alley, adding an asphalt driveway or completing a project that SDOT will permit subject to a field inspection. The field inspection is necessary in order for SDOT to determine whether the conditions on the site are suitable for the type of improvement desired. This type of permit cannot be issued until the permit application is complete AND the field review is approved by a City of Seattle inspector.

An applicant may also apply for a permit to complete street improvements that are not required by the Land Use Code. In some cases, an applicant will want to make street improvements that are allowable, but not required by DPD permit conditions. For example, an applicant may be upgrading the interior of a building without doing any activities that require a MUP or Construction Permit. As part of their project, they may wish to make improvements to the street right-of-way (e.g., paving, widening the sidewalk, adding street lighting). In this case, the applicant would apply to SDOT for a Street Improvement Permit. (Refer to [Section 2.4.1 Street Improvement Permits](#)).

2.1.4 Applying for Other Street Right-of-Way Permits

SDOT issues a number of permits for activities in the street right-of-way that are not related to construction or street improvements. These include, street vending, special events, temporary street closures, traffic and parking permits (e.g., residential parking zones), and others. Get more information on [other street right-of-way permits](#).

The SDOT Permit Evaluation Form lists the types of permits that may be required for work in the street right-of-way, depending on the scope of a project. Download a form and work with an SDOT permit reviewer to complete it.

2.2 Street Right-of-Way Improvement Permit Classification: Small, Medium and Large Projects

Street Right-of-Way Improvement Projects are classified according to the level of review that is required prior to issuance. The size of the project is determined by a Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) Plan Review Analyst using the Initial Assessment Form (IAF). A copy of the IAF is given to the permit applicant and also to DPD in cases where the street improvement work is related to a DPD development permit.

Small: Project to be reviewed by Street Use Division.

Medium: Project needs to be reviewed by other SDOT divisions.

Large: Project to be reviewed by several City departments.

2.2.1 Cost of City Services

The costs of services provided by the City of Seattle vary based on the type, duration and construction associated with the Street Improvement Permit process. A general cost range is as follows:

- Small projects with minimal public infrastructure impacts, which do not require survey, can range from \$2,000 to \$15,000 for City services.
- Medium projects with moderate public infrastructure impacts, can range from \$5,000 to \$20,000 for City services.
- Large or complex projects with significant public infrastructure impacts can range from \$25,000

and above for City services.

The SDOT Plan Review Analyst will provide a cost estimate of City services. This estimate will be based upon information provide by the applicant during the application phase and will be reviewed and updated as the project progresses through review, issuance, pre-construction and construction.

2.3 Street Improvement Permit Process Information Packet

To make the permit process as straightforward as possible, the City of Seattle has developed a Street Improvement Permit Process Information packet. This packet has three sections, each of which can function independently or as a whole. However, each focuses on a different part of the development and permit process. Brief explanations of each section of the packet as well as the web link to each follow:

- The [Applicant/Developer Information Section](#) is designed to help you understand and to meet the requirements that each applicant/developer must meet in of the City of Seattle's street right-of-way improvement permit process.
- The [Engineer/Designer Information Section](#) explains the steps required of engineers/designers (including architects) in the City of Seattle's street right-of-way improvement permit process.
- The [Contractor Information Section](#) explains the steps required of contractors in the City of Seattle's street right-of-way improvement permit process.

2.4 SDOT Street Right-of-Way Improvement Permits

[2.4.1 Street Improvement Permits](#)

[2.4.2 Shoring and Excavation Permits](#)

[2.4.3 Driveway and Curb Cut Permits](#)

[2.4.4 SDOT Reviews and Approvals for Street Trees and Landscaping](#)

[2.4.5 Seattle Parks and Recreation Department \(SPR\) Reviews and Approvals](#)

[2.4.6 Department of Planning and Development \(DPD\) Reviews and Approvals](#)

[2.4.7 Permits, Procedures and Approvals for Utilities in the Street Right-of-Way](#)

2.4.1 Street Improvement Permits

A Street Improvement Permit is a type of Street Right-of-Way Improvement Permit. It is required for major, permanent improvements in the street right-of-way such as paving a street, widening a street, or extending a public storm drain. On more complex (medium and large size) projects, street improvements such as street tree installation or curb cuts for driveways do not require separate Street Use Permits because they are addressed in the Street Improvement Permit for the project; however, private service drains and side sewers do require separate **Side Sewer Permits**, even when the connection of these systems to the public storm drain, sanitary, or combined sewer is shown on the Street Improvement Plan. Side Sewer Permits are issued by the Department of Planning and Development (DPD).

The following is a summary of Street Improvement Permit Issuance procedures. For more complete information on procedures and plan requirements, refer to SDOT CAM #461: Street Right-Of-Way Improvement Permit Procedures for Construction in the Street Right-of-Way, and SDOT CAM# 462: Plan Requirements for Construction in the Street Right-of-Way.

Step 1: Research

The applicant is required to review the City of Seattle's street improvement requirements in this Manual and the Land Use Code, and discusses the project with a Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) Plan Review Analyst. The applicant inquires about any dedication of land or easements that may be required for streets or utilities, or if other reviews will be required such as for storm water detention.

Step 2: Identify Location of Underground Utilities

Call the One Number Locator Service (ONLS) hotline of the Utility Underground Location Center and request the location of underground utilities except side sewers. If directional drilling is the proposed excavation, this information shall be given to ONLS.

Step 3: Submittal of Plans and Payment of Fee Deposit for Review

The applicant submits a completed Street Improvement Permit Application and Checklist along with construction plans prepared by a professional civil engineer to **Seattle Department of Transportation**.

The plans must meet the City of Seattle standards for format and drafting as well as content, and must meet the City of Seattle's design standards and specifications for public works projects.

Street improvement projects are also classified according to whether they will be high impact or low impact, based on whether the permit is for a project on an arterial street or a non-arterial street. Different **permit fee rates** apply depending on the type of street affected.

High impact: Work takes place on arterial streets. Streets in the downtown core are considered arterials. Work that takes place on an arterial street or sidewalk, or takes place on non-arterial streets but impacts arterial streets or sidewalks, requires a traffic control plan. Refer to the **Traffic Control Manual for In Street Work** for guidance on how to prepare a traffic control plan.

Low impact: Work takes place on non-arterial streets.

Get more information on **Seattle's street classifications**.

After an initial cost estimate has been prepared based on the plans submitted, the applicant pays a deposit equal to the total estimated cost including pre-construction activities, review and administrative fees. Construction within the street right-of-way follows **Standards Plans and Standard Specifications** unless approved otherwise.

Step 4: Plan Review

The Plan Review Analyst assigned to the project reviews the plans, circulates them for review to other departments of the City of Seattle and other pertinent agencies, and informs the applicant of any corrections or revisions required.

Step 5: Submittal of Revised Plans

The applicant re-submits corrected plans and/ other requested information. The Plan Review Analyst checks the revised plans to verify if all corrections have been made and whether the plan is ready for final approval.

Step 6: Final Plans

Once the Plan Analyst notifies that the plans are ready to be approved, the applicant submits the final plan set for signatures. The final plans must meet City of Seattle standards. These plans are signed by the SDOT Street Improvement Permit Manager and filed in the SPU Records Vault as a permanent record of improvements in the street right-of-way.

Step 7: Posting of Bond and Payment of Inspection Fee Deposit

As part of the approval notification, Plan Analyst will send an estimate of inspection deposit and surety bond required for the project. This deposit will cover construction inspection fee and any review costs not covered by initial deposit. The Street Improvement Permit is issued once the applicant posts the surety bond and pays the required permit fee and deposit.

Step 8: Pre-construction Meeting

Pre-construction meeting must be held before commencing construction in the street right-of-way. The applicant notifies SDOT at least two weeks before construction will begin so that a pre-construction meeting may be scheduled with the Street Use Inspectors and other staff. Both the applicant and the contractor must be present at the meeting.

2.4.2 Shoring and Excavation Permits

The City of Seattle requires a Street Use Shoring & Excavation Permit if a project meets the following criteria:

- excavation or construction adjacent to the street right-of-way deeper than three feet; and
- any excavation and extension from the bottom of an excavation at 100% (45 degree) slope that crosses a street right-of-way line.

This permit is required whether or not the street right-of-way is improved or even open to traffic. The purpose is to protect the stability of the street right-of-way and facilities within and/or near the street right-of-way.

In cases where there is an associated Department of Planning and Development (DPD) Construction Permit, SDOT does not issue a separate Shoring & Excavation Permit. However, plans for excavation or shoring must be approved by the SDOT's Street Use Section before DPD will issue a Construction Permit. Refer to SDOT's Client Assistance Memo (CAM) # 612: Shoring & Excavation Near Public Areas for more information.

2.4.3 Driveway and Curb Cut Permits

Driveway and curb cut installations must meet City requirements and specifications including:

- Width of the driveway or curb cut at the property line;
- **Grades and/or elevations** at the property line;
- **Driveway slope, crest, and curve**;
- "Sight triangles";
- Maneuvering room on site for vehicles; and
- Objects on or adjacent to the driveway.

Refer to SDOT's Building Grade Sheet for the project, **Seattle Standard Plans and Standard Specifications**, the Land Use Code (**Chapter 23.54 of the Seattle Municipal Code**), the Street Use Ordinance (**Chapter 15.06 of the Seattle Municipal Code**), and the design criteria for driveways in this Manual.

When there is no existing curb: When there is no existing curb, the City of Seattle requires a Street Use Driveway Permit for the installation of a driveway that will join with a public street. SDOT issues and inspects the work for this permit.

When there is an existing curb: The City of Seattle requires a Curb Cut Permit to remove a portion of an existing curb for the purpose of providing access to private property. This permit is issued by DPD and the work is inspected by SDOT.

2.4.3a Building and Alley Grade Sheets

The Land Use Code requires that parking areas and/or buildings are designed to meet the future grade of the street at the property line. The SDOT website includes a series of web pages that provide

guidance to developers, owners, and applicants to set the elevation of the parking areas and building access to meet the future elevations of the fully improved streets. The tool to provide the elevation at the property line representing the future elevation of the street is called a Building Grade Sheet.

The existing Building Grade Sheet process is refined with the web application that provides standards and guidelines to establish the elevation of the parking areas or building grades from the existing street pavement. Refer to the **Building Grade Sheet on-line tool**.

If your project has frontage along an alley you will need to complete an Alley Grade Sheet. Refer to the **Alley Grade Sheet on-line tool**.

2.4.4 SDOT Reviews and Approvals for Street Trees and Landscaping

SDOT standards include the preservation or planting of trees as an integral part of proposals for improvements in the street right-of-way. Selected, installed and protected to provide optimum functional and environmental benefits, trees are required street right-of-way infrastructure to be maintained and preserved for public benefit.

Though the City of Seattle issues various types of permits associated with trees and related landscape improvements on land under public jurisdiction, SDOT Urban Forestry Division is the lead for review and approval of plans for tree preservation, tree planting and related improvements in street right-of-way areas. Street Use Permits are required for installation, pruning, or removal of street trees and for installation of landscape improvements that require inspection to ensure compliance with public safety related standards.

2.4.4a Street Tree Permit

To encourage the proper planting of trees in the street right-of-way, SDOT's Urban Forestry Division provides review and approval of the tree type and planting location at no cost to the applicant. Applicants are responsible for maintenance of trees planted, including regular watering to ensure establishment, mulching, and pruning to ensure appropriate clearances over streets and sidewalks. Get a copy of the **Street Tree Permit application**.

2.4.4b Street Tree Removal or Pruning Permit

Street Tree Removal or Pruning Permits are required under **Seattle City Ordinance #90047**. Permit applications are subject to review and approval by the SDOT's Urban Forestry Division. Get a copy of the **permit application**.

Permit applications may be required to include public notification. In cases where the applicant is not the owner of the property abutting the proposed work, applications must include signatures of adjacent property owners. The extent of notification is determined on a case by case basis to ensure public safety and awareness and/or approval of the project. Names and addresses of contacts may be submitted for approval or provided as a component of the permit review process by the SDOT Urban Forestry Division. Permitted work must be completed within 60 working days from the time of permit issuance, unless otherwise defined by the permit.

2.4.4c Beautification Permit

Beautification Permits are required for the installation of landscape improvements in the street right-of-way. SDOT's Urban Forestry Division provides support services to promote appropriate planting in the street right-of-way. Applicants are encouraged to contact **SDOT Urban Forestry Division** to receive information on permit requirements and/or general guidelines for landscape architectural design and construction in the street right-of-way.

2.4.5 Seattle Parks and Recreation Department (SPR) Reviews and Approvals

Proposals for work in the street right-of-way associated with boulevards managed by the Seattle Parks

and Recreation Department (SPR) are subject to review and approval.

The following information describes the typical permits and approvals relevant to permitting work on SPR land.

2.4.5a Non-Park Uses of Seattle Parks and Recreation Department (SPR) Lands

Seattle Parks and Recreation Department (SPR), as steward of public park lands, is responsible for preserving and protecting Seattle's park system. In order to preserve the public character of park lands and assure their availability for public use and enjoyment, it is the policy of SPR to eliminate and prevent unauthorized non-park uses on SPR lands. Further, it is the policy of SPR to limit authorized non-park uses to the fullest extent practicable. Any project proposed for SPR lands must obtain a Revocable Use Permit (refer to **Section 2.5.6b**). Get more information in the **complete policy**.

2.4.5b Revocable Use Permits

Some streets have been designated as park drives or boulevards and are under the jurisdiction of Seattle Parks and Recreation Department (SPR) as part of the City's extensive parks system. These streets may or may not have the term "boulevard" in their name. A complete listing is available as **Appendix I to Title 15 of Seattle Municipal Code (SMC)**, known as the Street Use Ordinance.

Any work on these boulevards, or that may affect other park property, must be reviewed by SPR. A Revocable Use Permit, issued by the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, may be necessary. Refer to the SPR website and follow the links to **Permits for Non-Park Use of Park Property** or contact the Property Management Unit.

2.4.5c Design Intent for Seattle Parks and Recreation Department (SPR) Boulevards and Trails

Refer to the **Seattle Parks and Recreation Department (SPR) website** for basic information that project applicants must consider when developing landscape plans for boulevards or other streets and roadways under SPR jurisdiction.

2.4.5d Seattle Parks and Recreation Department (SPR) Tree Policy and Permits

The Seattle Parks and Recreation Department (SPR) Tree Policy was developed to maintain, preserve and enhance the urban forest within parks; to increase the overall tree canopy, tree health and tree longevity within parks including boulevards; and to ensure that parks trees are managed in a manner that is consistent with other departmental and municipal policies. Private work on trees on SPR property must be approved through issuance of a Tree Permit. Get a copy of the **permit and the complete policy**.

2.4.5e Seattle Parks and Recreation Department Standards

The Seattle Parks and Recreation Department (SPR) Standards are intended to facilitate design and construction of SPR facilities through standard requirements on SPR property. The Standards are based upon past experiences and practices that have proved successful during design, construction, operation, and maintenance of SPR facilities. In certain situations, Consultant deviations may be acceptable provided they are approved by the Park Engineer and/or Construction Manager prior to implementation. The deviation process described in **Section 2.6 Deviation Request Process for Street Right-of-Way Improvements** does not apply to, or replace, the SPR deviation request process for project on or adjacent to SPR lands. Refer to the **SPR standards homepage**, including SPR, CAD and Survey standards.

2.4.6 Department of Planning and Development (DPD) Reviews and Approvals

The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) has jurisdiction over and is responsible to regulate activities associated with Construction Permits or work on land designated as **Environmentally Critical Areas** including planting, removal, and maintenance of trees and other vegetation.

2.4.6a Department of Planning and Development Tree Protection Regulations

The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) enforces regulations regarding tree and vegetation protection and removal on private property and in the street right-of-way. To determine the regulations that apply to a specific site, reference DPD **Client Assistance Memo (CAM) #242: Tree Protection Regulations** in Seattle if the site is not in an Environmentally Critical Area or **CAM #331: Environmentally Critical Areas: Tree and Vegetation Removal Permits**.

2.4.7 Permits, Procedures and Approvals for Utilities in the Street Right-of-Way

2.4.7a Grading and Drainage in Seattle

Both permanent and temporary movement of earth on development sites is regulated by **Seattle's Stormwater Grading and Drainage Control Code (SGDC)**. This regulation—Chapters 22.800-22.808 of the Seattle Municipal Code—protects the graded site and adjoining public and private properties, preserves natural drainage patterns and watercourses, and controls pollution. The Code, along with four associated Department of Planning and Development (DPD) Director's Rules that provide technical requirements, applicability, and clarification of the code work together to provide a comprehensive framework for managing the quality and quantity of stormwater. The code prescribes regulations that provide protection to property, the environment, public interests, surface waters, and receiving waters. The regulations set forth in the code also meet the requirements of state and federal laws.

- **Construction Stormwater Control Technical Requirements Manual (DR 16-2000):** This manual details temporary erosion and sediment control technical requirements in addition to plan submittal requirements that help ensure controls are implemented. Physical, structural, and/or managerial practices during construction are described in the context of a Construction Stormwater Control Plan, which is required for activities when drainage control review is mandated. Refer to **Stormwater Control Plans for small projects** developed by DPD.
- **Source Control Technical Requirements Manual (DR 17-2000):** Source control requirements are designed to prevent pollution at the source and prevent contamination of stormwater for discharges and new development. The Source Control Technical Requirements Manual establishes when source control requirements apply. It details both structural and operational source controls for high risk pollution generating activities, distinguishing between existing and proposed developments. It also addresses operational source control measures, such as maintenance, for discharges.
- **The Flow Control Technical Requirements Manual (DR 26-2000):** This manual provides technical requirements and guidance necessary for controlling the discharge rate of stormwater runoff set forth in the code. Flow control options for managing discharge rates are provided. Submittal requirements are described, including the Standard Drainage Control Plan and Comprehensive Drainage Control Plan (for large projects).
- **Stormwater Treatment Technical Requirements Manual (DR 27-2000):** Technical requirements for designing, constructing, and maintaining treatment facilities are designed to remove certain pollutants from stormwater runoff before they are able to enter a receiving water body. This manual establishes when treatment is required. Designs for various types of facilities are provided, as well as a landscape management plan and alternative treatment technology.

Any land disturbing activity or new and replaced impervious surface of 750 square feet or more requires Drainage Control Review. For more information about drainage approvals and submittal requirements refer to DPD Client Assistance Memo (CAM) #501 Making Sense of Seattle's Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code, or contact DPD's Site Development staff or Drainage & Sewer Review staff. For grading related to Construction Permits, refer to CAM #502, Grading Regulations in Seattle.

The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code (SGCD) also guides temporary erosion and sediment control requirements for private development projects. In addition, **Seattle's Standard Plans**

and Standard Specifications guides temporary erosion and sediment control in the street right-of-way. The Regional Road Maintenance Endangered Species Act Program provides recommended best management practices for routine maintenance activities in the street right-of-way.

2.4.7b Drainage Requirements Form (DRF)

The Drainage Requirements Form (DRF) is a new tool is planned for implementation in 2005. The purpose of this tool will be to help determine drainage requirements associated with Construction, Master Use, and Street Use Permits issued by the City. Determining drainage requirements is based on a variety of factors, and these factors are determined in part by the applicant, Department of Planning and Development (DPD), SDOT and SPU policies, City code and existing and planned City infrastructure. The DRF process is designed to "fast track" key project data through a review process by key City subject matter experts to determine the impact the project will have upon the City and the environment, and how City code applies to that project. The form provides preliminary requirements tailored to a specific project that can be provided to applicants prior to the start of the formal application process.

2.4.7c Side Sewer Permitting

Side sewers, which include service drains and any other piping that is connected to public storm drains or sewers, are installed, owned, and maintained by the owner of the property being served. This ownership extends from the building structure to the tee or wye connection at the main, and therefore the property owner is responsible for excavation, installation, and restoration within the street right-of-way.

Side sewer construction shall be in accordance with the City of Seattle Standard Plans and Specifications, latest edition. There may be additional requirements for service taps, backfilling, shoring, and restoration within the street right-of-way or public easement.

Side Sewer permitting is administered by the Department of Planning and Development, which provides guidance and ensures that requirements are met by performing application review and site inspection. Construction work in the street right-of-way is inspected by SDOT. Get more information on **side sewer permitting**.

2.4.7d Temporary Construction Dewatering and Stormwater Management

In constructing street right-of-way improvements that involve ground disturbance or excavation, there are requirements for managing stormwater flows during construction. At minimum, a Temporary Erosion and Sediment Control Plan will need to be prepared and submitted as part of the requirements of the Street Use Permit. Other permits will be required. A Waste Discharge Permit from King County for state permits may also be required. Refer to **Section 2.9.3 Other Permits and Special Issues**

Dewatering is defined as the removal and appropriate discharge and release of surface water and subsurface water. Temporary dewatering is when this activity occurs during construction. If this activity is significant in terms of impact, the applicant will be required to prepare a Temporary Dewatering Plan, subject to approval by Seattle Public Utilities. The applicant will need to obtain a Temporary Side Sewer Permit in order to dispose of dewatering discharges, as administered through DPD as well as King County. Significant activities triggering these requirements include; excavations greater than 12 feet, encountering groundwater during construction, encountering contaminated water, and other triggers. Refer to the **Side Sewer Permit for Temporary Dewatering Director's Rule (DR 02-04)** for detailed information on requirements.

2.4.7e Water Services, Hydrants, and Other Water System Appurtenances

The installation of water services, hydrants, and other water system appurtenances in the street right-of-way that are to serve a property or development requires a Street Use Permit issued by SDOT and either a standard charge or a time and materials charge payable to SPU. The installation of these

facilities is done by SPU and the Street Use Permit is obtained by SPU.

To obtain a water service, there are several key steps:

- Determine your use, and the flow range and diameter of the water service you need. Contact SPU's Customer Service consultants for assistance.
- Obtain a Water Availability Certificate (WAC) to determine whether water service is available to your property. A legal description and the name and address of the owner/contact person is required for the WAC. If water is available, you can apply for a water service at SPU's Customer Service Branch on the 31st floor of the Key Tower. At the time of this application, payment for the water service must be made. In some cases, a plan by a registered professional engineer that is acceptable to SPU may be required. Otherwise SPU will use its standard details.
- Once application and payment has been made, the Street Use Permit application and installation is performed by SPU.

If hydrants and other water system appurtenances in the street right-of-way are needed for your project and they are individual installations (e.g., water fountain, hydrant) that is not part of a larger water system improvement, then a request and payment will need to be made to SPU.

Contact SPU for more information and a standard charge or time and materials charge payable to SPU will be required prior to the commencement of any work. In some cases, a design by a registered professional engineer will be needed. Once the fees and design are complete, the Street Use Permit and installation are performed by SPU as is the case with water service installations. Refer to the SPU website for SPU Director's Rule 01-04: Standard and Administrative Charges Rule and **water rates**.

2.4.7f City Light Permit Processes for New Street Lights

For streetlight installations on street existing wood poles, no permit is required. If Seattle City Light has to install a new wood pole in the street right-of-way for a streetlight, then a permit is required for the pole, but not for the streetlight itself.

If a metal streetlight standard is installed in an area where utilities are underground, a permit will be required for doing trenching in the street right-of-way. That permit will cover the installation for the conduits, the streetlight base, and the light standard.

2.4.7g City Light Permit Processes for Pole and Wireless Attachments

Fiber optic or cable attachments: A Street Use Permit is not required for Seattle City Light to process Pole Attachment Applications. City Light also does not need a Street Use Permit to prepare an existing pole for the new attachment. However, if a pole must be replaced to accommodate a new cable or wireless antenna attachment, then City Light would obtain a permit for setting the pole. This is not to be confused with the applicant's own work in the street right-of-way. In all cases, the applicant, who requests to attach equipment on City Light poles must obtain a Street Use Permit from SDOT prior to constructing their system.

In addition to obtaining the aforementioned Street Use Permit from SDOT, the applicant must also obtain permission and approval from City Light prior to attaching any of their equipment on City Light poles. A pole attachment application must be submitted to City Light well in advance. A Master Pole Attachment Agreement is also required if the applicant is going to attach their equipment to seven or more City Light poles. Contact City Light Distribution Design Office for information regarding the Pole Attachment Application form and the Master Pole Attachment Agreement.

Wireless antenna attachments: For wireless antenna attachments on City Light poles, there is a review process, which, among other things, includes a request for preliminary determination from City Light as to the feasibility of a site for such equipment, a submittal of written application in writing along

with a deposit and/or bond to cover the work, etc. Contact City Light Real Estate Services for more information regarding City Light requirements and processes for wireless antenna attachments.

2.4.7h Privately Owned Utilities

If the project impacts an underground utility, it is possible that the utility is owned and maintained by a private entity, which has been granted authority by the City of Seattle to place facilities in the street right-of-way. The Utility Permit Specialist in SDOT Street Use Division will inform the applicant of any special requirements that may apply.

2.5 Other Street Right-of-Way Improvement Activities

City Departments also regulate or provide guidance on a number of other activities that impact the street right-of-way. This section defines the existing process for street and alley vacations and shoreline street ends.

2.5.1 Street and Alley Vacation Process

If your proposed project includes incorporating street right-of-way into the development or includes the realignment of street right-of-way, it will be necessary to petition for a street vacation. A street vacation is the process by which an abutting property owner can petition the City to acquire the adjacent street right-of-way.

Street and Alley Vacations are reviewed by SDOT, the Seattle Design Commission and City Council who makes the final decision on whether or not to grant the vacation. The City has established policies and procedures to guide the decision. Because the City takes such a careful look, it is important to contact the street vacation staff early in your development planning. Street vacation staff can explain the process, costs and time frame associated with the review of a vacation. Staff will also make every effort to assess whether a vacation appears to be feasible in your particular circumstance. Tunnels and aerial use of the street right-of-way also require vacations.

Get more information about [street vacations](#).

2.5.2 Shoreline Street Ends and Unimproved Rights-of-Way

Shoreline Street Ends are those platted streets that run into water and provide access and/or views of Lake Washington, Lake Union or Puget Sound. The City has 149 shoreline street ends. Many are already open to the public. SDOT Director's Rule #00-1, the City's guidelines on the Shoreline Street Ends Program, which includes improving a shoreline street end for public access.

[City Resolution 29370](#), adopted in September 1996, identified shoreline street ends as a scarce and valuable public resource which should be open for the enjoyment and benefit of the public. This policy was adopted after much public discussion and careful consideration. [Ordinance 119673](#) was adopted in October 1999 to establish a new type of permit and a new fee schedule for permitting private uses of the shoreline street ends. Although the ultimate goal is to remove private uses of these street ends, the permit process acknowledges some private uses will continue.

Refer to [Section 2.10.2 State and Federal Permits and Approvals](#) for information on additional permits that may be required for work on street ends including Army Corps of Engineer Permits Section 10: Hydraulic Permit Approval (HPA) and Section 401: Discharge of Dredge and Fill. Refer to [Section 2.8.4 Shoreline Substantial Development Permits](#), as the project may also require a Shoreline Permit.

2.5.3 Traffic Control Signs in the Street Right-of-Way

Development projects are required to identify existing traffic control signs in street right-of-way and replace them following construction. Modifications to existing signage can be requested through the [Street Improvement Permit Process](#).

2.6 Deviation Request Process for Street Right-of-Way Improvements

2.6.1 What is a Deviation Request

The design criteria presented in this Manual have been developed to assure that Seattle's street rights-of-way are designed in such a manner as to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public and to minimize post-construction maintenance and repair costs.

An applicant can request a deviation from the design criteria in this Manual for a street right-of-way improvement project by following the process defined in this section. In the case of a deviation request, the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) will require the applicant to define the deviation request through the materials defined in *Section 2.6.2 Deviation Request Submittal Process*. The final decision on whether a deviation request is granted lies with SDOT.

Any project that modifies or potentially impacts the operation or maintenance of traffic signals or street lights will be deemed a deviation. The SDOT signal or lighting staff lead will immediately begin working with developer or agents to determine if the deviation request is feasible.

The Deviation Request Process defined in this section applies to deviations from the design criteria presented in this Manual, and does not apply to or replace, any other deviation, variance or exception process required for the City of Seattle permits or approvals or those of other agencies.

2.6.2 Deviation Request Submittal Process

1. **Initial contact:** An applicant will contact SDOT Street Use staff to request a deviation for a street right-of-way improvement.
2. **Optional design guidance meeting:** The applicant has the option to participate in a Design Guidance meeting with SDOT staff to share contact information and discuss information relative to proposed street right-of-way improvements, including potential deviations and the necessary information that SDOT will require to evaluate the deviation request prior to permit submittal. The deviation review is completed by SDOT staff and an hourly fee is charged to the applicant. Refer to the Street Use fee schedule. The total cost of the deviation review will depend upon the complexity of the request.
3. **Deviation request submittal:** If the applicant chooses to apply for a deviation, he or she must submit the following:
 - A completed *Deviation Request Form*.
 - Site Plan including:
 - Site Address, property lines, street right-of-way and existing easement dimensions.
 - Topographic survey of existing site including underground and overhead utilities.
 - Proposed improvements at a conceptual design level illustrating proposed building footprint, modifications to roadways, modifications to traffic signals, driveways, utility connections, stormwater facilities, pedestrian facilities, retaining structures, and landscape features.
 - Description of how proposed work is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Strategic Plan, as well as any subarea transportation plans or neighborhood plans relevant to the area.
 - Engineering justification for the deviation proposal. The justification should describe the impacts of meeting the standard and why the deviation is the preferred alternative.

- Proposed project schedule.
- Information on existing and predicted vehicular and pedestrian traffic volumes, when changes are expected as a result of the project.
- If any addition or modification of traffic signals is part of the deviation request, the applicant can access information from the signal files in Traffic Operations and other as-built records.
- Any additional information defined in the optional Design Guidance meeting that SDOT determine necessary to evaluate the deviation request.

The permit reviewer will do a quick review of the deviation request to determine if it meets the minimum submittal requirements.

4. **Deviation request coordination and review:** When a deviation request is submitted, SDOT's Street Use staff will consult with appropriate staff within SDOT and other departments that will be impacted by the deviation. If no further information is needed to process the deviation request, SDOT will typically process the request and notify the applicant if the request has been accepted or rejected within one week of the submittal. If City staff require additional information to process the request, the SDOT reviewer will alert the applicant to the expected timeframe for review of the deviation submittal (typically not more than 30 days).
5. **Permit submittal:** Depending on the nature of the improvement, SDOT may require the deviation request to be signed and sealed by a professional engineer and approved by SDOT before the issuance of a Street Right-of-Way Improvement Permit. Following acceptance or rejection of the deviation request, the applicant will submit finalized plans for the street right-of-way improvement to SDOT's Street Use Division.

Note: Approved deviation requests will apply for a period of two years from the date of approval. After the two year period, the applicant will be required to modify the proposal to be consistent with the standards that are current at the time they submit a permit application.

2.7 Master Use Permits (MUPs)

[2.7.1 Street Improvement Requirements](#)
[2.7.2 SEPA Environmental Review](#)
[2.7.3 Design Review Requirements and Procedures](#)
[2.7.4 Shoreline Substantial Development Permits](#)

[2.7.5 Dedication of Street Right-of-Way or Easement](#)
[2.7.6 No-Protest Agreement for Future Improvements](#)

A Master Use Permit (MUP) is issued by the Department of Planning and Development (DPD). When the project includes work that will impact the right-of-way, the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) reviews the proposal for the work in the street right-of-way and gives a recommendation to DPD to include in the MUP decision.

MUP applications typically require a number of additional reviews, approvals and permits. A description of these is listed below.

2.7.1 Street Improvement Requirements

The Land Use code identifies levels of required street improvements associated with development. Refer to the **DPD website** for more information, including specific sections of the Land Use Code. Exceptions to the required street improvements may be granted. Contact DPD to discuss exceptions that are allowable through the Land Use Code.

2.7.2 SEPA Environmental Review

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), RCW Chapter 43.21 C, requires governmental agencies to

consider the environmental impacts of a proposal before making decisions.

The environmental impacts of certain public and private development proposals must be assessed by the City of Seattle per SEPA and the Seattle SEPA Ordinance (**Chapter 25.05**, Seattle Municipal Code or SMC). The level of documentation required to comply with SEPA is dictated by the type of impacts a project may have. There are three levels of documentation:

- **Categorical exemption (CE):** The first level of documentation is for projects with minimal or no impacts. SEPA does not require formal documentation of CEs. However, certain state and federal permits may require a letter or memo indicating a project is exempt. CEs are listed in SMC 25.05.800.
- **Determination of non-significance (DNS):** The second level of documentation is for projects with some impacts that are less than significant or can be mitigated. These impacts are documented with a SEPA Checklist and supporting documentation. SEPA checklist requirements can be found in SMC 25.05.315.
- **Determination of significance (DS):** The third level is for projects with impacts that are expected to be significant. This is documented by an environmental impact statement (EIS). SEPA EIS requirements can be found in SMC 25.05.400.

In order for these assessments to be made, permit applicants whose projects meet certain criteria are required to prepare an Environmental Checklist. Refer to **DPD Director's Rule 23-2000: State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Exemptions from Environmental Review Requirements When Establishing, Changing, or Expanding a Use**. For a complete listing of exempt and non-exempt projects, refer to SMC **Chapter 25.05**.

2.7.2a Environmental Review as Part of the Permit Process

Environmental review is a part of the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) Master Use Permit (MUP) process. Components of a MUP may also include use approvals, variances, administrative conditional uses, design review, special exceptions, shoreline district approvals, short plats, and certain street uses. DPD is also responsible for environmental review of City Council conditional uses, full subdivisions, major institution master plans, rezones, and Land Use Code text amendments. For larger development projects whose impacts may significantly affect the environment, a checklist will not provide adequate environmental review. Projects that may significantly impact the environment will require an environmental impact statement (EIS).

2.7.2b Filling Out the Environmental Checklist

If a project is subject to the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and not categorically exempt, an **Environmental Checklist** must be filled out and submitted by the applicant at the time of permit application, so that DPD can review the project for compliance. Refer to the Environmental Checklist on the DPD website or contact the DPD Public Resource Center.

If the environmental review for a project has been completed by another City department or by a different governmental agency, a copy of the threshold determination and the Environmental Checklist—or the draft and final EIS—must be made available to the public at DPD's Public Resource Center. A copy of the threshold determination and environmental impact statement (EIS), if any, must also be submitted to DPD at the time of application for a Master Use or Construction Permit or City Council approval.

Applicants must fill out the Environmental Checklist accurately and completely in ink, acknowledging potential impacts, including those associated with demolition, grading, and construction (temporary as well as permanent). Measures that an applicant plans to take to mitigate adverse environmental impacts associated with a project should be discussed under the appropriate element(s) of the environment.

The completed checklist must be dated and signed and must include the complete street address of the project. Future development proposals related to the project should be discussed even if details are not fully established. This will ensure that the applicant does not need to go through an additional environmental review and appeal period later in the process. However, discussion of future development proposals in the checklist does not exempt an applicant from independent SEPA review of a future project, if that project is over SEPA thresholds. For example, if it is known that a second phase of an office building is likely to follow the initial phase for which permits are sought, that information should be disclosed in the checklist for the first project, but does not by itself exempt the second phase from environmental review at the time of future permit application.

In most circumstances, the review for the total proposal must be completed before any permits can be issued. The more complete the information provided, the faster the review of the project can be conducted. If the information submitted is incomplete or if additional information is needed to make an accurate analysis of the environmental impacts of a project, the applicant will be required to furnish further information. Contact a DPD Land Use Planner for more information on these requirements.

2.7.2c Transportation Impact Analyses and Parking Demand Studies

As part of the environmental review process, traffic impact analyses (TIA) or parking demand studies may be required to document a project's transportation or parking impacts. A TIA typically estimates traffic volumes that a proposed project would generate, and compares the operating conditions of nearby intersections or roadway segments with and without the additional traffic. A TIA may also estimate potential traffic queues, examine any outstanding safety issues, and assess the impact of the project on transit, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities.

Projects may also be required to demonstrate that they satisfy transportation concurrency requirements established under the Washington State Growth Management Act. The City of Seattle uses a screenline approach to track transportation concurrency. Under this approach, a transportation analysis estimates the auto trips generated by the project that will cross one or more screenlines near the project site. Project volumes plus background traffic volumes for a screenline are compared to the established capacity for the screenline. Refer to the **Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Element** for additional information on level of service standards and screenlines.

Parking demand studies compare a project's expected peak parking demand with its proposed supply. Peak parking demand may be the same as, or less than, code-required parking for a particular project, or it may exceed code requirements. If a comparison of parking demand and supply indicates that parking may spill over onto adjacent streets or off-street parking lots, a parking utilization study may be required to document the ability of nearby on- and off-street parking areas to absorb the estimated spillover. Refer to Client Assistance Memo (CAM) 117: Parking Waivers for Accessory Dwelling Units for guidelines on how to complete a parking demand study. Refer to SMC 25.05.675, Specific Environmental Policies, Section M: Parking, to determine if parking spillover needs to be mitigated.

SEPA review may result in transportation mitigation measures consistent with SEPA policies such as full or partial contributions to transportation system improvements, such as new or upgraded traffic signals or roadway modifications.

2.7.2d Hazardous Materials Analysis

Section B-7a of the SEPA checklist (Environmental Elements, Environmental Health) requires the disclosure of any environmental releases or potential releases to the environment affecting public health, such as toxic or hazardous materials that may be caused by, or encountered during a proposed project. This includes contamination of private property and potential migration into the street right-of-way. This section of the checklist should summarize any analyses that have been completed, evidence of past contamination or reports indicating the site has been contaminated, such as: windshield surveys, Phase I and/or Phase II Environmental Site Assessments, property record searches, communications with the Washington State Department of Ecology, and cleanup action reports. These documents should

accompany the checklist. Similarly, a section on environmental health should be included in an EIS and be accompanied by similar evaluations.

For more information on SEPA **contact a DPD Permit Specialist.**

2.7.3 Design Review Requirements and Procedures

The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) coordinates the citywide Design Review Program. Design Review helps new developments to contribute positively to neighborhoods by exploring ways in which new multifamily and commercial buildings can best respond to their sites and distinctive surroundings. The Design Review Guidelines provide a flexible tool, offering alternatives to the prescriptive zoning requirements and specific regulations found in the City's Land Use Code. **DPD's website** includes a section on design review that provides a number of resources for project applicants who will be required to complete the **Design Review Process**.

In some cases, design guidelines exist that define unique characteristics that are desirable in the street right-of-way. Most design guidelines are neighborhood specific.

2.7.4 Shoreline Substantial Development Permits

Shoreline Permits are elements of the Master Use Permit (MUP) process administered by the Department of Planning and Development (DPD). Shoreline Permit regulations are required by the Shoreline Management Act of 1971, as amended, Chapter 90.58 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW). This State law requires local governments to establish a program consistent with rules adopted by the State Department of Ecology (DOE) for the administration and enforcement of the permit system titled State of Washington Shoreline Master Program Guidelines. Accordingly, the City has adopted regulations for the shorelines of the City in the Seattle Shoreline Master Program. Those regulations are contained in **Chapter 23.60 of the Seattle Municipal Code**. DPD has a **Client Assistance Memo (CAM) # 209: Master Use Permit Application Requirements for Shoreline Permits**.

Permit requirements: A Shoreline Substantial Development Permit is required for projects which propose to undertake a "substantial development" within the "Shoreline District" as defined by the Seattle Shoreline Master Program. Substantial development is generally defined as any development, the total cost or fair market value of which exceeds five thousand dollars (\$5,000), OR any development which materially interferes with the normal public use of the water or shorelines of the City, as excepted below:

Exceptions: State law specifically exempts certain types of development from the requirement to obtain a Substantial Development Permit. These exemptions are listed in **Appendix B of CAM#209**. If a project is exempt, the applicant must obtain a written confirmation from DPD before any other required City, State or Federal permit can be issued. The City's shorelines (designated the "Shoreline District") include Seattle's saltwater shorelines, Salmon Bay, Lake Union, the Ship Canal, Lake Washington, Green Lake, and the Duwamish River, PLUS "associated wetlands" of these waters. By definition, associated wetlands comprise an area extending 200 feet landward, as measured on a horizontal plane from the ordinary high water mark, PLUS marshes, swamps, bogs, floodways, river deltas and flood plains associated with such areas.

2.7.5 Dedication of Street Right-of-Way or Easement

Developers and contractors are sometimes required by DPD to dedicate property for transportation purposes in order to receive a Construction Permit. When this occurs, DPD notifies the SDOT Real Property Services that a dedication of private property is required. SDOT works directly with the developers to ensure they comply with the permitting requirements. **Refer to SDOT Client Assistance Memo 415** for information and procedures on dedications of street right-of-way or easements.

2.7.6 No-Protest Agreement for Future Improvements

When a proposed development is not required to provide full street improvements, a No-Protest

Agreement shall be provided. A No-Protest Agreement is a document signed by the property owner signifying agreement not to object to the formation of a Local Improvement District (LID) for constructing future street improvements. Get more information on No-Protest Agreements, including a No-Protest Agreement Form.

2.8 Construction Permits

Construction Street Permits are issued by the Department of Planning and Development (DPD). When a Construction Permit application includes work within the street right-of-way, than the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) reviews and must approve the work to be permitted. This approval must be in place before the Construction Permit is issued.

2.8.1 SDOT Review of Construction Permit Applications

Refer to [Section 2.1.2a Initiation of Public Street Improvements](#) for more information on this topic.

2.8.2 Grading Activity

For an overview of grading and drainage regulations, refer to [Section 2.4.7a Grading and Drainage in Seattle](#).

Grading activity, whether or not it requires a permit or approval from the City, must comply with the provisions of the Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code (SGDC). The following guidance applies:

- Separate Grading Permits issued by DPD are required for work on private property when the work is not associated with a Building Permit.
- When grading is associated with a Construction Permit, grading review and approval become a component of the Construction Permit and a separate Grading Permit is not required.
- Grading review takes place only when the thresholds referred to in the DPD [Client Assistance Memo 502: Grading Regulations](#) in Seattle are exceeded. DPD administers the grading and drainage provisions of the SGDC for work on private property when part of a Building or Grading Permit.

CAM 502 also includes the procedures for dealing with hazardous materials and soils investigation and reporting.

Refer to the [Building and Alley Grade Sheet](#) to determine appropriate grades for a project.

For more information about grading approvals, permits, standards or submittal requirements for a specific project, contact [DPD's Site Development staff](#).

2.9 Environmental Permits and Approvals

Environmental Permits and approvals are a necessary component of many types of development projects, including those that impact street rights-of way. This section details local, state and federal Environmental Permits and approvals that may apply to a development project. Two charts follow that summarize the Environmental Permits for the City and State/Federal agencies. More detailed information on each permit type, regulation or approval process can either be found in this chapter or through a link to the responsible agency.

2.9.1 City of Seattle Environmental Permits/Approvals

[2.9.1 City of Seattle Environmental Permits/Approvals](#)

[2.9.2 King County Permits and Approvals](#)

[2.9.3 State and Federal Permits and Approvals](#)

2.9.1a Environmentally Critical Areas

City of Seattle Regulations for Environmentally Critical Areas (ECAs) apply to sites that include landslide prone, flood-prone, riparian corridor, wetland, and steep slope environmentally critical areas. Activity in these areas requires preparation of a surveyed site plan and submittal of additional information relating to critical areas and their buffers as part of the application and review process for development proposals. This information is required in addition to technical reports described in Section 25.09.060 of the Seattle Municipal Code and plot plan requirements outlined in [Client Assistance Memo \(CAM\) 103B: Environmentally Critical Area Site Plan Requirements](#).

2.9.1b Temporary Erosion and Sediment Control

Refer to [Section 2.4.7a Grading and Drainage in Seattle](#)

2.9.1c Construction Stormwater Control Technical Requirements Manual (DR 16-2000)

Refer to [Section 2.4.7a Grading and Drainage in Seattle](#)

2.9.1d Landmarks Certificate of Approval

In Seattle, a Certificate of Approval is required for any project that will alter the appearance (including demolition) of a protected feature of a designated landmark or a property located in an historic or special review district. This process requires submittal of an application to the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) Office of Urban Conservation and review by the Seattle Landmarks Board or the review board for the landmark district.

If your project may affect a landmark or is in one of the following districts, you will need to talk with staff at the [Department of Neighborhoods](#). Review of these applications varies from district to district, depending upon the special characteristics of each area. For site-specific information, refer to the following SMC sections and ordinance.

- International District—SMC 23.66.318
- Pioneer Square Preservation District—SMC 23.66.115
- Pike Place Market Historical District—SMC 25.24.060
- Columbia City Landmark District—SMC 25.20.070
- Ballard Avenue Landmark District—SMC 25.16.065
- Harvard-Belmont Landmark District—SMC 25.12.090
- Fort Lawton Landmark District—Ordinance 114011

State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Policies regarding preservation of landmarks are found in SMC 25.05.675.

NOTE: If your building appears to meet the criteria for landmark designation, but is not currently designated as a landmark, the structure may be referred to the Landmarks Preservation Board for consideration (per SMC 25.05.675H2c).

2.9.2 King County Permits and Approvals

Some projects may require a King County Waste Discharge Permit. These permits are needed if the discharge could be expected to contain chemicals or contaminants that differ from ordinary sewage. The permit is also needed when discharging drainage into a sanitary-only sewer. This is only allowed if the drainage is contaminated and it is not feasible to pre-treat and discharge to the drainage system. Get more information on the King County Waste Discharge Permit.

2.9.3 State and Federal Permits and Approvals

Permit Type	Overview and Web Link	Agency
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Air Quality	<p>Notice of Construction Approval (NOC): Ecology or the local air authority has review and approval authority for the construction of new sources or modifications to existing sources of air pollution.</p> <p>Sources proposing to construct a new source or modify an existing source must submit a Notice of Construction Application to Ecology or the local air authority. The application must include a description of the new or modified source, the types of equipment used that will generate air pollution, the types and amounts of air pollutants released into the air, and proposed methods for air pollution control or prevention.</p>	<p>Washington State Department of Ecology Air Quality Program 300 Desmond Drive PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504-7600 (360) 407-6800 (360) 407-6802 fax</p>
Aquatic Resources	<p>Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA): Work that uses, diverts, obstructs, or changes the natural flow or bed of any of the salt or fresh waters of state requires a Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA). Permit processing can take up to 45 days following receipt of a complete application package. Download the application for an individual permit, called a Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application (JARPA).</p>	<p>Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife 600 Capital Way North Olympia, WA 98501-1091 (360) 902-2534 (360) 902-2946 fax</p>
	<p>Aquatic Use Authorization: Anyone wishing to use state-owned aquatic lands (including harbors, state tidelands, shorelands, and beds of navigable waters and owners of adjacent lands) must get authorization from DNR. Other activities for which authorization is required include shellfish/aquaculture leases, geoduck harvest sales, dredge disposal, easements for bridges and utility crossings (including outfalls), and sand and gravel removal. Download an application for an individual permit, called a Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application (JARPA).</p>	<p>Washington State Department of Natural Resources Aquatic Resources Division 1111 Washington Street SE PO Box 47027 Olympia, WA 98504-7027 (360) 902-1100 (360) 902-1786 fax</p>
Archaeological and Cultural Resources	<p>Archaeological Excavation Permit: Excavation altering or removing archaeological resources or Native Indian grave sites. The status of any sites or structures listed in or eligible for the State or National Register of Historic Places or Local Landmark designation may need to be determined. Plans for protection or mitigation measures may be a condition of any permit issued. Get more information from the DPD Director's Rule 2-98.</p>	<p>Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development PO BOX 42525 Olympia, WA 98504-2525 (360) 725-3000 (360) 753-2950 fax</p>
Water Quality—Federal	<p>401 Water Quality Certification: Applying for a federal permit or license to conduct any activity that might result in a discharge of dredge or fill material into water or non-isolated wetlands or excavation in water or non-isolated wetlands. Issuance of a certification means that the</p>	

	<p>Ecology anticipates that the applicant's project will comply with state water quality standards and other aquatic resource protection requirements under Ecology's authority. The 401 Certification can cover both the construction and operation of the proposed project. Conditions of the 401 Certification become conditions of the Federal permit or license. Download an application for an individual permit, called a Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application (JARPA).</p> <p>Coastal Zone Consistency Determination: Activities and development affecting coastal resources which involve federal activities, federal licenses or permits, and federal assistance programs (funding) require a written Coastal Zone Management (CZM) decision by Ecology.</p>	
	<p>Section 10 Permit - Work in Navigable Waters: A Corps Permit is required when locating a structure, excavating, or discharging dredged or fill material in waters of the United States or transporting dredged material for the purpose of dumping it into ocean waters. Typical projects requiring these permits include the construction and maintenance of piers, wharfs, dolphins, breakwaters, bulkheads, groins, jetties, mooring buoys, and boat ramps.</p>	
	<p>Section 404 Permit - Discharge of Dredge and Fill Material: A Corps Permit is required when locating a structure, excavating, or discharging dredged or fill material in waters of the United States or transporting dredged material for the purpose of dumping it into ocean waters. Typical projects requiring these permits include the construction and maintenance of piers, wharfs, dolphins, breakwaters, bulkheads, groins, jetties, mooring buoys, and boat ramps.</p>	<p>US Army Corps of Engineers Seattle District Regulatory Branch PO Box 3755 Seattle , WA 98124-2255 (206) 764-3495 (206) 764-6602 fax</p>
Waste and Toxic Substance Permits	<p>Dangerous Waste Treatment, Storage, and Disposal Facility: Facilities that store, treat, and/or dispose of dangerous waste must obtain a Dangerous Waste Permit for any dangerous waste activities that do not meet the less-stringent generator requirements.</p>	<p>Washington State Department of Ecology Hazardous Waste & Toxics Reduction Program 300 Desmond Drive PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504-7600 (360) 407-6700 (360) 407-6715 fax</p>
	<p>Hazardous Substance Release Notification Requirement (MTCA): The Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) is a citizen-mandated hazardous waste cleanup law. Under the MTCA regulations, owners and operators must report to Ecology any</p>	

	<p>release or threatened release of a hazardous substance on their site. This requirement must be met if a historical release, or a situation that could cause a release is discovered on a site. A verbal or written report must be made within ninety days of discovery.</p>	
	<p>Hazardous Waste Release Notification (Spills or Releases): Prompt notification to Ecology is required when spills or releases of hazardous substances occur that have the potential to impact human health or the environment. Responsibility for reporting spills lies with the person who spills or releases the substance, however, any person aware of such spills is encouraged to contact Ecology.</p>	<p>Washington State Department of Ecology 300 Desmond Drive Lacey, WA 98503 (360) 407-6000</p>
	<p>Model Toxics Control Act-Reporting Independent Remedial Actions: Any person who conducts an independent remedial action must submit a written report to Ecology within ninety days of completing the action. (Refer to the discussion of underground storage tanks (UST) for requirements specific to USTs) A limited number of these reports are reviewed by Ecology to evaluate, as a whole, the independent remedial actions conducted.</p>	<p>Washington State Department of Ecology 300 Desmond Drive Lacey, WA 98503 (360) 407-6000</p>
	<p>RCRA Site ID Number: The required Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Site ID# is an identifying number used for tracking wastes from their point of generation to final disposal. The Uniform Hazardous Waste Manifest system (EPA Form 8700-22) is the primary mechanism to ensure that wastes reach their intended destination. The transporter and the receiving facility signatures on the manifest you have prepared and sent with the shipment provide some assurance that the waste has been properly handled.</p> <p>Download an application for an individual permit, called a Notification of Dangerous Waste Activities FORM 2.</p>	<p>Washington State Department of Ecology Hazardous Waste & Toxics Reduction Program 300 Desmond Drive PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504-7600 (360) 407-6700 (360) 407-6715 fax</p>
	<p>Underground Injection Control Registration: A state registration form, available from the Department of Ecology, must be completed by people who have installed or intend to install an underground injection control (UIC) well. A drywell, infiltration trench with perforated pipe, subsurface infiltration gallery and large on site septic system are some examples of UIC wells that need to register. Permits may be required, but would be determined on a site by site basis.</p>	<p>Washington State Department of Ecology Water Quality Program 300 Desmond Drive PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504-7600 (360) 407-6400 (360) 407-6426 fax</p>

	<p>Underground Storage Tank Notification Requirements: A state notification form, available from the Department of Ecology must be completed by people who have installed or intend to install an underground storage tank (UST).</p>	<p>Washington State Department of Ecology Toxics Cleanup Program 300 Desmond Drive PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504-7600 (360) 407-7170 (360) 407-7154 fax</p>
Water Quality Permits	<p>NPDES Individual Permit: A permit is required for soil disturbing activities (including grading, stump removal, demolition), where one or more acres will be disturbed, and have a discharge of stormwater to a receiving water (e.g., wetlands, creeks, unnamed creeks, rivers, marine waters, ditches, estuaries), and/or storm drains that discharge to a receiving water. If stormwater is retained on site, but detention facilities need to be constructed, permit coverage is required.</p>	<p>Washington State Department of Ecology Water Quality Program 300 Desmond Drive PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504-7600 (360) 407-6400 (360) 407-6426 fax</p>
	<p>NPDES Construction Stormwater General Permit: A permit is required for soil disturbing activities (including grading, stump removal, demolition), where 1 or more acres will be disturbed, and have a discharge of stormwater to a receiving water (e.g., wetlands, creeks, unnamed creeks, rivers, marine waters, ditches, estuaries), and/or storm drains that discharge to a receiving water. Browse Ecology's Construction Booklet for more information.</p>	<p>Washington State Department of Ecology Water Quality Program 300 Desmond Drive PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504-7600 (360) 407-6400 (360) 407-6426 fax</p>
	<p>State Waste Discharge Permit: Planned discharge of wastewater to the ground or discharge of wastewater, other than domestic sewage, to municipal treatment plant requires a State Waste Discharge Permit. Discharges from industrial facilities to municipal wastewater treatment plants require a State Waste Discharge Permit if they haven't been issued a Pretreatment Discharge Permit by the municipality. Download the application for an individual permit here.</p>	<p>Washington State Department of Ecology Water Quality Program 300 Desmond Drive PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504-7600 (360) 407-6400 (360) 407-6426 fax</p>
	<p>Underground Injection Control Registration: Registration is required for disposal of fluids into an injection well</p> <p>The Underground Injection Control Program (UIC) protects ground water quality by regulating the disposal of fluids into the subsurface. Most UIC wells or injection wells are simple devices that allow fluids into the shallow subsurface under the force of gravity. For example, in Washington State thousands of UIC wells, mainly dry wells, are located along parking lots and roads to manage stormwater runoff. The potential</p>	<p>Department of Ecology 300 Desmond Drive Lacey, WA 98503 (360) 407-6000</p>

	for ground water contamination from UIC wells can occur and is dependent on the well construction and location, the volume and quality of the fluids injected and the hydrogeologic setting.	
Water Resource Permits	Permit to Withdraw or Divert Surface or Ground Water : Washington State law requires certain users of public waters to receive approval from the state prior to use of the water - in the form of a Water Right Permit or certificate. Any use of surface of water (lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, or springs) which began after the state water code was enacted in 1917 requires a Water-Right Permit or certificate. Likewise, ground-water withdrawals from 1945 onward, when the state ground-water code was enacted, require a Water-Right Permit or certificate. Refer to the Ecology website for complete information about this permit, including allowable exceptions.	Washington State Department of Ecology Water Resources Program 300 Desmond Drive PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504-7600 (360) 407-6600 (360) 407-7162 fax
Wetland Permits	Wetlands : If you anticipate working in lands that are transitional between open water and uplands or that may be periodically inundated or saturated, you may be dealing with wetlands. Wetlands perform numerous important functions including water quality improvement, flood peak reduction, and stream and groundwater recharge while providing essential fish and wildlife habitat. Numerous federal, state, and local laws affect the use and protection of wetlands.	Washington State Department of Ecology 300 Desmond Drive Lacey, WA 98503 (360) 407-6000

2.10 Public Notification

The requirements for notifying the public of improvements being made to the street right-of-way varies among permit types. Specific notification requirements, if they exist, are indicated under the applicable permit type.

2.11 Contact Information

Organization Name/Website	Phone
Department of Neighborhoods (DON) Landmarks Certificate of Approval	(206) 684-0228
Department of Planning and Development (DPD)	
DPD Applicant Services Center and Permit Specialists	(206) 684-8850
DPD Drainage and Sewer Review Staff	(206) 684-5362
DPD Land Use Planner	(206) 684-8850
DPD Public Resource Center	(206) 684-8467
Seattle Municipal Tower 700 5th Avenue, 20th Floor	
DPD Site Development Staff	(206) 684-8860

DPD Transportation Impact Analysis and Parking Demand Studies	(206) 684-5837
King County Waste Discharge Permits	(206) 263-3002
Seattle City Light (SCL) Engineering Services	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential and Commercial Customers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - North of Denny Way (206) 615 0600 - South of Denny Way (206) 386-4200 Large commercial and Industrial Customer: (206) 233-7177 	
SCL Distribution Design Office for Pole Attachments	(206) 615-0655
SCL Real Estate Services Division for Wireless Antenna Attachments	(206) 684-3394
SDOT Arborist's Office	(206) 615-0957
SDOT Shorelines Street Ends Program	(206) 684-5147
SDOT Street and Alley Vacations	(206) 684-7564
SDOT Street Use Division	(206) 684-5283
SDOT Street Use Permit Counter Seattle Municipal Tower 700 5th Avenue, Suite 3700 (37th Floor)	
SDOT Street Use Utility Permit Specialist	(206) 684-5193
SDOT Urban Forestry Office	(206) 233-7829
Seattle Public Utilities (SPU)	(206) 684-3000
General Information	
Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR)	
SPR Design Standards	(206) 684-4075
SPR Property Management Unit	(206) 233-7935
Utility Underground Location Center and "Call Before You Dig" Hotline	800-424-5555

Additional contact information and resources are located in the [City of Seattle Staff Directory](#), which is searchable by Department, Division and individual staff.



Chapter 3

Right-of-Way Improvement Requirements



3.1 Overview of Requirements from the Land Use Code (Ch. 23.53 & 23.22)

The City of Seattle Land Use Code (Chapter 23.53 of the Seattle Municipal Code) requires that streets adjacent and leading to lots being created, developed, or redeveloped, be improved or brought up to the minimum conditions specified in the Land Use Code and this Manual.

The street improvement requirements vary with land use zones to reflect the intensity of development, the scale and character of the zone, and to provide a balance between the need to accommodate vehicular and pedestrian traffic and the desire to preserve existing neighborhood character. In addition to the requirements for street and alley improvements contained in the Land Use Code, further street and alley improvements may be required through the environmental review process.

All required street improvements shall be constructed by the developer and accepted by the Transportation Department prior to issuance of the final Certificate of Occupancy. A temporary Certificate of Occupancy may be issued prior to completion of street improvements when approved by the Director of Transportation.

What improvements are required for:




-  [Existing Streets](#)
 -  [New Streets](#)
 -  [Alleys](#)
 -  [Vehicle Access Easements Across Private Property](#)
-

Right-of-Way Improvement Requirements

3.1.1 Existing Streets

Right-of-Way and Roadway

Width Requirements

-  [Arterials](#)
-  [Non Arterials](#)
-  [Is Your Project on an Arterial?](#)

Improvement Requirements



[By Zone](#)



[Find Your Zone with DPD GIS](#) (Choose Zoning from the Map Legend)

3.1.1a Existing Streets, Arterial Width Requirements

Arterial Street Right-of-Way and Roadway Width Requirements for Existing Streets

Street right-of-way and roadway widths for most existing arterials have been established by the Transportation Department. Those arterials which require additional right of way to provide for adequate pavement width, sidewalks, and/or street trees have been identified.

Required Street Right-of-Way and Roadway Widths for Seattle Arterials

[Arterial Listings »](#)

Where the street right-of-way or roadway width has not been established, it will be determined for a permit applicant by the Transportation Department upon request.

When new street improvements are required and the existing street right-of-way width does not meet the established width the additional street right-of-way shall be dedicated. When there is no requirement for the installation of curb, sidewalk, or pavement improvements, or a curb already exists, a setback and No-Protest Agreement are permitted in lieu of a dedication and improvements.

When the existing roadway is narrower than the required roadway, and no new pavement or curb improvements are required, a [No-Protest Agreement](#) shall be provided in lieu of roadway widening. Get more information on [No Protest Agreements](#).

Existing Streets | No Protest Agreements

Dedication: Dedication of property for street right-of-way purposes is required when the existing street right-of-way width is less than the width specified and when new street improvements are to be installed. In most cases, the required dedication will be equal to half the difference between the existing street right-of-way width and the minimum required street right-of-way width. Refer to Chapter 23.53 of the Land Use Code for a full statement of dedication requirements.

Setback: A setback is permitted in lieu of a dedication when there is no requirement for the installation of curb, sidewalk, and pavement improvements, or a curb already exists. In most cases, site improvements must be set back from the existing street right-of-way line an amount equal to the required dedication. However, in all residential zones except Highrise (HR) zones an additional 3-foot setback is also required.

The area of the setback may be used to meet land use development standards, except for required parking. (The setback may be included within other setbacks required by the Land Use Code.) It may also be used for other purposes which would not interfere with future street

improvements. Underground structures may be located in the setback area, when approved by the Director of Transportation. Refer to Chapter 23.53 of the Land Use Code for a full statement of setback requirements.

No-Protest agreement for future improvements: When the street right-of-way width or roadway width is less than required and no improvements for new pavement or curb are required, a No-Protest Agreement shall be provided in lieu of improvements. A No-Protest Agreement is a document signed by the property owner signifying agreement not to object to the formation of a Local Improvement District (LID) for constructing and paying for future street improvement.

3.1.1b Existing Streets, Non-Arterial Minimum Right-of Way Width Requirements

Low Density Residential			
Zone	Standard Street Right-of-Way ¹	Minimum Street Right-of-Way ²	Standard Roadway Width ³
SF, LDT, L1, NC1	50 feet	40 feet	25 feet
Mid-Density Residential and Mixed Commercial/ Residential			
Zone	Standard Street Right-of-Way ¹	Minimum Street Right-of-Way ²	Standard Roadway Width ³
L2, NC2-30, NC2-40	60 feet	40 feet	32 feet
L3, L4, NC2-65	60 feet	52 feet	32 feet
High-Density Residential and Mixed Commercial/Residential and Industrial 1			
Zone	Standard Street Right-of-Way ¹	Minimum Street Right-of-Way ²	Standard Roadway Width ³
NC3, MR, HR	60 feet	52 feet	36 feet
C1, C2, IB, IC	66 feet	52 feet	40 feet
IG1, IG2	66 feet	56 feet	40 feet

¹ If a project is on a block which is split into more than one land use zone category, the zone category with the most frontage determines the minimum width required. If the land use categories have equal frontage, the one with the greater requirement shall be used to determine the minimum street width.

² If the street has greater than the minimum right-of-way width and less than the standard right-of-way width, consult with the SDOT Plan Review office regarding the required roadway width. Minimum requirements are identified in Chapter 23.53 of the Seattle Municipal Code.



³ This width is the standard curb-to-curb design width of a fully improved street. If full street improvements are not constructed, the resultant interim pavement width may be less than this standard. See pages (reference to design standards from 2-18).

Where the existing right of way width is less than the width shown above right of way dedication or setback a [No-Protest Agreement is required](#).

3.1.1c Existing Streets, Improvement Requirements by Zone

[« Back to Previous Page](#)







Residential

- | | |
|---|---|
|  SF Single Family |  L1 Lowrise 1 |
|  LDT Lowrise/Duplex/Triplex |  L2 Lowrise 2 |
|  MR Midrise |  L3 Lowrise 3 |
|  HR Highrise |  L4 Lowrise 4 |



Commercial

-  **NC1** Neighborhood - Commercial 1
-  **NC2** Neighborhood - Commercial 2
-  **NC3** Neighborhood - Commercial 3
-  **C1** Commercial 1
-  **C2** Commercial 1

Industrial

-  Industrial Landscape Street Map
-  **IC** Industrial/Commercial
-  **IB** Industrial Buffer—directly across from or adjacent to commercial or residential zones
-  **IB** Industrial Buffer—not directly across from or adjacent to commercial or residential zones
-  **IG1** General Industrial 1
-  **IG2** General Industrial 2

Downtown and Seattle Mixed Zones

-  Downtown
-  Seattle Mixed

Existing Streets | Improvement Requirements by Zone | Residential

1-2 Units

Proposed projects with no more than two residential units.

Partial Requirements

Projects that meet the following criteria:

- 3 to 9 units in SF zones
- 1 to 9 units or platting of 1 to 9 lots in LDT and L1 zones

- 1 to 5 units in L2, L3, L4, MR, HR zones
- Interior remodels and interior use changes
- Additions exempt from environmental (SEPA) review
- Parking lot expansion of less than 20% of existing parking



Full Requirements

Those projects not meeting the above exceptions are required to provide full improvements.

Existing Streets | Improvement Requirements by Zone | Residential | 1-2 Units

One or Two New Dwelling Units or Residential Lots

- **Roadway width:** 16 feet plus thickened edge for drainage
- **Roadway surface:** Crushed rock (Portland cement concrete or asphalt concrete is required for roadways with a slope greater than 10%)

[Refer to Figure 3-4: Asphalt Concrete Pavement: New Pavement For Streets without Existing Hard Surface](#)

[ 33 kb]

[Refer to Figure 3-5: Asphalt Thickened Edge Detail](#)


[ 301 kb]

- **Curb, sidewalk:** Not required.
- **Street drainage:** Required when street improvements are installed.
- **Street grading:** Required when street improvements are installed: standard street cross section to property lines on project side; to 5 feet beyond thickened edge on opposite side.
- **Dedication:** Not required.
- **Setback:** Not required.
- **No protest agreement:** Required.

Refer to [Figure 3-2: Crushed Rock Improvement](#)

[ 34 kb]

Refer to [Figure 3-3: Crushed Rock Improvement Edged Detail](#)

[ 135 kb]

Existing Streets | Improvement Requirements by Zone | Residential | Partial

Small Residential Projects with Partial Improvement Requirements

- **Roadway width:** 18 feet for existing pavement; 20 feet plus thickened edge when there is less than 18 feet of existing pavement.
- **Roadway surface:** Portland cement concrete or asphalt concrete.
- **Curb, sidewalk:** Not required.
- **Street trees:** Required as specified in the Land Use Code. Where there is no curb, trees shall be located on private property.
- **Street drainage:** Required when street improvements are installed.
- **Street grading:** Required when street improvements are installed: standard street cross section to property line on project side of street; to 5 feet beyond pavement edge on opposite side.
- **Dedication:** Not required.

- **Setback:** Required when right-of-way width is less than shown in [Arterial List](#) or the [Non-Arterial Minimum Street Right-of-Way Width Requirements Table](#).
- **No-protest agreement:** Required when the right-of-way or roadway width is less than shown in the [Arterial List](#) or the [Non-Arterial Minimum Street Right-of-Way Width Requirements Table](#) when the street does not have existing curbs, or when existing curbs or when the existing curb is not in the permanent location and no new curb is required.

Refer to [Figure 3-5: Asphalt Thickened Edge Detail](#) [ 301 kb]

Refer to [Figure 3-6: Asphalt Concrete Pavement: New Pavement For Streets without Existing Hard Surface](#) [ 33 kb]

Refer to [Figure 3-7: Asphalt Concrete Pavement: Pavement Widening For Existing Hard Surface Streets](#) [ 23 kb]

Existing Streets | Improvement Requirements by Zone | Residential | Full

Residential Projects with Full Improvement Requirements

- **Roadway width:** Arterial widths are specified in the [Arterial List](#); Non-arterial widths are specified in the [Non-Arterial Minimum Street Right-of-Way Width Requirements Table](#).
- **Roadway surface:** Portland cement concrete or asphalt concrete is required on the half-street on the project side of the street, plus one travel lane on the other side of the street.
- **Curb, sidewalk:** Required on project side of street.
- **Street trees:** Required as specified in the Land Use Code.
- **Street drainage:** Required when street improvements are installed.
- **Street grading:** Required when street improvements are installed: standard street cross section to property line on project side of street and 5 feet beyond pavement edge on opposite side.
- **Dedication:** Required when there is less than the minimum required right of way width and street improvements are required.
- **Setback:** Required when right of way width is less than widths shown in the [Arterial List](#) or the [Non-Arterial Minimum Street Right-of-Way Width Requirements Table](#) and no dedication is required.
- **No-protest agreement:** Required when the right of way or roadway width is less than shown in the [Arterial List](#) or the [Non-Arterial Minimum Street Right-of-Way Width Requirements Table](#) or when there is no curb or when the existing curb is not in the permanent location and no new curb is required.
- [Summary Table of Street Improvement Requirements](#).

[Refer to Figure 3-5: Asphalt Thickened Edge Detail](#) [ 301 kb]

[Refer to Figure 3-8: Pavement Widening For Existing Hard Surface Streets](#) [ 27 kb]

[Refer to Figure 3-9: Curb and Sidewalk Improvement: New Pavement for Streets without Existing Hard Surface](#) [ 37 kb]

Existing Streets | Improvement Requirements by Zone | Commercial

Street improvement requirements for development or creation of new lots in NC1, NC2, NC3, C1, and C2 commercial zones are shown below and in the [Summary of Street Improvement](#)

[Requirements.](#)



Partial Improvement Requirements

- 1 to 5 residential units
- Major and minor vehicle repair uses or multipurpose convenience stores of less than 750 square feet
- Non-residential structures of less than 4000 square feet g.f.a.
- Mixed use structures with fewer than the units listed above and less than 4000 sq. ft. of non-residential use
- Interior remodels and interior use changes
- Additions exempt from environmental (SEPA) review
- Parking lot and open storage area expansion of less than 20% of area or parking spaces



Full Improvement Requirements

Those projects not meeting the above exceptions are required to provide full improvements.

Existing Streets | Improvement Requirements by Zone | Commercial | Partial

Small Commercial Projects with Partial Improvement Requirements

- **Roadway width:** 18 feet for existing pavement; 20 feet plus thickened edge when there is less than 18 feet of existing pavement.
- **Roadway surface:** Portland cement concrete or asphalt concrete.
- **Curb, sidewalk:** Not required.
- **Street trees:** Required as specified in the Land Use Code. Where there is no curb, trees shall be placed on private property.
- **Street drainage:** Required when street improvements are installed.
- **Street grading:** Required when street improvements are installed: standard street cross section to property line on project side of street and five feet beyond pavement edge on opposite side.
- **Dedication:** Not required unless additional right of way is needed to install the required pavement width.
- **Setback:** Required when right of way width is less than the width shown in the [Arterial List](#) or the [Non-Arterial Minimum Street Right-of-Way Width Requirements Table](#) and no dedication is required.
- **No-protest agreement:** Required when the right of way or roadway width is less than shown in the [Arterial List](#) or the [Non-Arterial Minimum Street Right-of-Way Width Requirements Table](#), when the street does not have existing curbs, or when existing curbs are not in the permanent location.
- [Summary of Street Improvement Requirements.](#)

Refer to [Figure 3-5: Asphalt Thickened Edge Detail](#)

[ 301 kb]

Refer to [Figure 3-7: Asphalt Concrete Pavement: Pavement Widening For Existing Hard Surface Streets](#)

[ 23 kb]

Refer to [Figure 3-10: Asphalt Concrete Pavement: New Pavement For Streets without Existing Hard Surface](#)

[ 33 kb]

Existing Streets | Improvement Requirements by Zone | Commercial | Full

Commercial Projects with Full Improvement Requirements

- **Roadway width:** Arterial widths are specified in the Arterial List; Non-arterial widths are specified in the [Non-Arterial Minimum Street Right-of-Way Width Requirements Table](#).
- **Roadway surface:** Portland cement concrete or asphalt concrete is required on the half-street on the project side of the street, plus one travel lane on the other side of the street.
- **Curb, sidewalk:** Required on project side of street.
- **Street trees:** Required as specified in the Land Use Code.
- **Street drainage:** Required when street improvements are installed.
- **Street grading:** Required when street improvements are installed: standard street cross section to property line on project side of street and 5 feet beyond pavement edge on opposite side.
- **Dedication:** Required when there is less than the minimum required street right-of-way width and street improvements are required.
- **Setback:** Required when street right-of-way width is less than shown in the [Non-Arterial Minimum Street Right-of-Way Width Requirements Table](#) and no dedication is required.
- **No-protest agreement:** Required when the right of way or roadway width is less than shown in the [Non-Arterial Minimum Street Right-of-Way Width Requirements](#)

[Table](#) or when there is no curb or when the existing curb is not in the permanent location and no new curb is required.

- [Summary of Street Improvement Requirements.](#)

Refer to [Figure 3-5: Asphalt Thickened Edge Detail](#) [ 301 kb]

Refer to [Figure 3-8: Pavement Widening For Existing Hard Surface Streets](#) [ 27 kb]

Refer to [Figure 3-9: Curb and Sidewalk Improvement: New Pavement for Streets without Existing Hard Surface](#) [ 37 kb]

Existing Streets | Improvement Requirements by Zone | Industrial

Industrial Commercial Zones (IC); Industrial Buffer (IB) —directly across from or adjacent to commercial or residential zones



[Small Projects with Reduced Improvement Requirements](#)



[Projects with Full Improvement Requirements](#)

Existing Streets | Improvement Requirements by Zone | Industrial | Reduced

Small Projects in Industrial Commercial Zones (IC); Industrial Buffer (IB) —directly across from or adjacent to commercial or residential zones with Reduced Improvement Requirements

- Major and minor vehicle repair uses or multipurpose convenience stores of less than 750 square feet.
- Non-residential structures of less than 4000 square feet gross floor area.
- Interior remodels and interior use changes.
- Additions exempt from environmental (SEPA) review.
- Parking lot and open storage expansion of less than 20% of area or existing parking spaces.
 - **Roadway width:** 18 feet for existing pavement; 20 feet plus thickened edge when there is less than 18 feet of existing pavement.
 - **Roadway surface:** Portland cement concrete or asphalt concrete
 - **Curb, sidewalk:** Not required.
 - **Street trees:** Required as specified in the Land Use Code. Where there is no curb, trees shall be placed on private property.
 - **Street drainage:** Required when street improvements are installed.
 - **Street grading:** Required when street improvements are installed: standard street cross section to property line on project side of street and 5 feet beyond pavement edge on opposite side.
 - **Dedication:** Not required unless additional right-of-way is needed to install the required pavement width.
 - **Setback:** Required when right-of-way width is less than shown in the [Arterial List](#) or the [Non-Arterial Minimum Street Right-of-Way Width Requirements Table](#) and no dedication is required.
 - **No-protest agreement:** Required when roadway or right-of-way width is less than the minimum shown in the [Arterial List](#) or the [Non-Arterial Minimum Street](#)

- [Right-of-Way Width Requirements Table.](#)
- [Summary of Street Improvement Requirements.](#)

Types of small industrial projects with reduced improvement requirements are defined in Paragraph 23.53.020 E2 of the Land Use Code.

Refer to [Figure 3-5: Asphalt Thickened Edge Detail](#) [ 301 kb]

Refer to [Figure 3-6: Asphalt Concrete Pavement: New Pavement For Streets without Existing Hard Surface](#) [ 33 kb]

Refer to [Figure 3-7: Asphalt Concrete Pavement: Pavement Widening For Existing Hard Surface Streets](#) [ 23 kb]

Existing Streets | Improvement Requirements by Zone | Industrial | Full

Projects in Industrial Commercial Zones (IC); Industrial Buffer (IB) —directly across from or adjacent to commercial or residential zones - with Full Improvement Requirements

- **Roadway width:** Arterials width specified in the [Arterial List](#); Non-arterials width specified in [Non-Arterial Minimum Street Right-of-Way Width Requirements Table](#).
- **Roadway surface:** Portland cement concrete or asphalt concrete is required on the half-street on the project side of the street, plus one travel lane on the other side of the street.
- **Curb, sidewalk:** Required on project side of street.
- **Street trees:** Required as specified in the Land Use Code.
- **Street drainage:** Required when street improvements are installed.
- **Street grading:** Required when street improvements are installed: standard street cross section to property line on project side of street and 5 feet beyond pavement edge on opposite side.
- **Dedication:** Required when there is less than the minimum required right of way width and street improvements are required.
- **Setback:** Required when street right-of-way width is less than the width shown in the [Arterial List](#) or the [Non-Arterial Minimum Street Right-of-Way Width Requirements Table](#).
- **No-protest agreement:** Required when the street right of way or roadway width is less than the width shown in the [Non-Arterial Minimum Street Right-of-Way Width Requirements Table](#) or when there is no curb or when the existing curb is not in the permanent location and no new curb is required.
- [Summary of Street Improvement Requirements](#). Additional requirements for projects located within the Stadium Transition Area Overlay District, refer to Exhibit 23.74.010a: Pedestrian Environment Designation of the Land Use Code.

Refer to [Figure 3-5: Asphalt Thickened Edge Detail](#) [ 301 kb]




Refer to [Figure 3-8: Pavement Widening For Existing Hard Surface Streets](#) [ 27 kb]

Refer to [Figure 3-9: Curb and Sidewalk Improvement: New Pavement for Streets without Existing Hard Surface](#) [ 37 kb]

Existing Streets | Improvement Requirements by Zone | Industrial

General Industrial Zones (IG1, IG2); Industrial Buffer (IB) — not directly across from or

adjacent to commercial or residential zones

-  [Small Industrial Projects with Reduced Improvement Requirements](#)
-  [Larger Industrial Projects in IG1, IG2, and IB Zones on Designated Landscape Streets](#)
-  [Larger Industrial Projects in IG1, IG2, and IB Zones Not on Designated Landscape Streets](#)

Existing Streets | Improvement Requirements by Zone | Industrial

Small Industrial Projects in IG1, IG2, and IB Zones with Reduced Improvement Requirements

- **Roadway width:** Meet Fire Code requirements; 28 feet recommended by Transportation Department for operation of trucks.
- **Roadway surface:** Meet Fire Code requirements (Portland cement concrete or asphalt concrete is required for roadways with a slope greater than 10%).
- **Curb, sidewalk:** Not required.
- **Pedestrian walk:** Required.
- **Street drainage:** Required when street improvements are installed.
- **Street grading:** Required when street improvements are installed: standard street cross section to property line on project side and 5 feet or more beyond the pavement edge on the opposite side.
- **Dedication:** Not required.
- **Setback:** Required when the right of way width is less than shown in the [Arterial List](#) or the [Non-Arterial Minimum Street Right-of-Way Width Requirements Table](#).
- **No-protest agreement:** Required when roadway or right of way width is less than the minimum shown in the [Arterial List](#) or the [Non-Arterial Minimum Street Right-of-Way Width Requirements Table](#).
- [Summary of Street Improvement Requirements for Existing Streets in General Industrial Zones Table](#).

[Refer to Figure 3-3: Crushed Rock Improvement Edged Detail](#) [ 143 kb]

[Refer to Figure 3-5: Asphalt Thickened Edge Detail](#) [ 301 kb]

[Refer to Figure 3-11: Crushed Rock Improvement Industrial Zones](#) [ 34 kb]

[Refer to Figure 3-12: Asphalt Concrete Pavement: New Pavement for Streets without Existing Hard Surface in Industrial Zones](#) [ 33 kb]

[Refer to Figure 4-15: Asphalt Pedestrian Walkway](#) [ 380 kb]

[Refer to Figure 4-16: Asphalt Pedestrian Walkway 10 Feet or More From Existing Roadway](#) [ 573 kb]

Existing Streets | Improvement Requirements by Zone | Industrial

Larger Industrial Projects in IG1, IG2, and IB Zones on Designated Landscape Streets

[View Designated Industrial Landscape Street Map](#)

- **Roadway width:** Arterial widths are specified in the Arterial List; Non-arterial widths are specified in the [Non-Arterial Minimum Street Right-of-Way Width Requirements Table](#).
- **Roadway surface:** Portland cement concrete or asphalt concrete is required on the project side of the street, plus one travel lane on the other side of the street.
- **Curb, sidewalk:** Required.
- **Street trees:** Required as specified in the Land Use Code.
- **Street drainage:** Required.
- **Street grading:** Required when street improvements are installed: standard street cross section to property line on project side of street and 5 feet beyond edge of pavement on opposite side.
- **Dedication:** Required when there is less than the minimum required right of way width and street improvements are required.
- **Setback:** Required when the right of way width does not meet the minimum shown in the [Arterial List](#) or the [Non-Arterial Minimum Street Right-of-Way Width Requirements Table](#).
- **No-Protest agreement:** Required when the right of way or roadway width is less than shown in the [Arterial List](#) or the [Non-Arterial Minimum Street Right-of-Way Width Requirements Table](#) or when the street does not have existing curbs or when the existing curb is not in the permanent location and no new curb is required.
- [Summary of Street Improvement Requirements for Existing Streets in General Industrial Zones](#).

Refer to [Figure 3-5: Asphalt Thickened Edge Detail](#) [ 301 kb]

Refer to [Figure 3-8: Pavement Widening For Existing Hard Surface Streets](#) [ 27 kb]

Refer to [Figure 3-9: Curb and Sidewalk Improvement: New Pavement for Streets without Existing Hard Surface](#) [ 37 kb]

Refer to [Figure 3-13: New Concrete Sidewalk with Existing Curb](#) [ 23 kb]

Existing Streets | Improvement Requirements by Zone | Industrial

Larger Industrial Projects in IG1, IG2, and IB Zones Not on Designated Landscape Streets

- **Roadway width:** Meet Fire Code requirements; 28 feet recommended by the Transportation Department for operation of trucks.
- **Roadway surface:** Meet Fire Code requirements (Portland cement concrete or asphalt concrete is required for roadways with a slope greater than 10%).
- **Curb, sidewalk:** Not required.
- **Pedestrian walk:** Required.
- **Street drainage:** Required.
- **Street grading:** Standard street cross section when improvements are required.
- **Dedication:** Not required.
- **Setback:** Required when street right-of-way width is less than the width shown in the [Arterial List](#) or the [Non-Arterial Minimum Street Right-of-Way Width Requirements Table](#).
- **No-protest agreement:** Required when the street right-of-way or roadway width is less than the width shown in the [Arterial List](#) or the [Non-Arterial Minimum Street Right-of-Way Width Requirements Table](#) when the street does not have existing curbs, or when existing curbs are not in the permanent location.

- [Summary of Street Improvement Requirements for Existing Streets in General Industrial Zones.](#)

Refer to [Figure 3-3: Crushed Rock Improvement Edged Detail](#) [ 143 kb]

Refer to [Figure 3-5: Asphalt Thickened Edge Detail](#) [ 301 kb]

Refer to [Figure 3-11: Crushed Rock Improvement Industrial Zones](#) [ 34 kb]

Refer to [Figure 3-12: Asphalt Concrete Pavement: New Pavement for Streets without Existing Hard Surface in Industrial Zones](#) [ 33 kb]

Existing Streets | Improvement Requirements by Zone | Downtown and Seattle Mixed Zones

Downtown and Seattle Mixed Zones

Improvements are determined on a case by case basis. Contact the [Seattle Department of Transportation](#) for more information.

3.1.2 New Streets

Street Right-of-Way and Roadway

New streets created through the platting process or otherwise dedicated shall meet the improvement requirements specified below. The creation of new streets requires dedication of property to the City of Seattle for street purposes.

Width Requirements

 [Arterials](#)

 [Non Arterials](#)

Street Improvement Requirements

 [Arterials](#)

 [Non Arterials](#)

Connecting Streets

Vehicular access from the project site to the rest of the street system shall be provided. When the connecting streets between the project site and the nearest hard-surfaced street do not meet the Fire Code requirements for fire access, the project owner shall upgrade the streets as follows:

- For one or two dwelling units or single family homes, a crushed rock roadway at least 16 feet wide shall be provided; all other types of development shall provide a paved roadway at least 20 feet wide, unless there is an existing hard-surfaced roadway at least 18 feet wide.
- New roadway improvements shall be graded to the future street elevations (as shown on the Building Grade Sheet) with a thickened edge provided for drainage. The connecting roadway shall be paved at least 100 feet beyond the project boundary; crushed rock is acceptable for one or two dwelling units. If more than 100 feet of connecting roadway improvement is required, the remainder may be crushed rock if approved by the Fire Department.

Crushed rock is not allowed when the roadway grade exceeds 10%.

3.1.2a New Streets, Required Widths - Arterials

Street right-of-way and roadway widths for new arterials vary depending on the pavement width needed to serve projected traffic volumes and parking needs. The width required for new streets shall be determined by the Seattle Department of Transportation. For more information, contact [Street Use](#).

Right-of-Way Improvement Requirements

3.1.2b New Streets, Required Widths - Non Arterials

Minimum street right-of-way and roadway widths required for new non-arterial streets. Street right-of-way widths for new non-arterial streets in Downtown or zoned Seattle Mixed shall be determined by the Seattle Department of Transportation. For more information, please contact [Street Use](#).

Right-of-Way and Roadway Widths for New Non Arterial Streets

Land Use Zone Categories*	Right-of-Way Width	Roadway Width
SF, LDT, L1, NC1	50 feet	25 feet
L2, L3, L4, NC2	56 feet	32 feet
MR, HR, NC3	60 feet	36 feet
C1, C2, IB, IC	60 feet	40 feet
IG1, IG2	66 feet	40 feet

* If a project is on a block which is split into more than one land use zone category, the zone category with the most frontage determines the minimum width required. If the land use categories have equal frontage, the one with the greater requirement shall be used to determine the minimum width.

3.1.2c New Streets, Street Improvement Requirements - Arterials

New arterial streets shall be fully improved to the design roadway width and pavement depth, with curbs, sidewalks, and street trees on both sides of the street, and drainage facilities.









Refer to [Figure 3-14: Full Improvements for Newly Dedicated Streets](#)

[ 39 kb]

Improvement required for new streets. Utilities and appurtenances needed to serve the new development, such as water, electricity, telephone, public sewer, public storm drain, streetlights, and fire hydrants shall be installed in conjunction with construction of the street improvements.

3.1.2d New Streets, Street Improvement Requirements - Non Arterials




Residential

- | | |
|---|---|
|  SF Single Family |  L1 Lowrise 1 |
|  LDT Lowrise/Duplex/Triplex |  L2 Lowrise 2 |
|  MR Midrise |  L3 Lowrise 3 |
|  HR Highrise |  L4 Lowrise 4 |



Commercial

-  **NC1** Neighborhood - Commercial 1
-  **NC2** Neighborhood - Commercial 2
-  **NC3** Neighborhood - Commercial 3
-  **C1** Commercial 1
-  **C2** Commercial 1

Industrial

-  **IB** Industrial Buffer
-  **IG1** General Industrial 1
-  **IG2** General Industrial 2

Downtown and Seattle Mixed Zones

-  Downtown
-  Seattle Mixed Zones

New Streets | Street Improvement Requirements | Non Arterials | Residential

Partial Improvements

One to nine dwelling units in SF, LDT, and L1 zones
One to five dwelling units in L2, L3, L4, MR, and HR zones

Full Improvements


Ten or more dwelling units in SF, LDT, and L1 zones
Six or more dwelling units in L2, L3, L4, MR, and HR zones

New Streets | Street Improvement Requirements | Non Arterials | Residential Street Improvements | Partial Improvements

Partial Residential Street Improvements

- **Roadway surface:** Portland cement concrete or asphalt concrete.
- **Curb, sidewalk:** Not required.
- **Street grading:** Standard street cross section to right of way line on both sides of street.
- **Street drainage:** Required.

Refer to [Figure 3-5: Asphalt Thickened Edge Detail](#)

[ 301 kb]

Refer to [Figure 3-6: Asphalt Concrete Pavement: New Pavement For Streets without Existing Hard Surface](#)

[ 33 kb]

Refer to [Figure 3-7: Asphalt Concrete Pavement: Pavement Widening For Existing Hard Surface Streets](#)


[ 23 kb]

New Streets | Street Improvement Requirements | Non Arterials | Residential Street Improvements | Full Improvements

Full Residential Street Improvements

- **Roadway surface:** Portland cement concrete or asphalt concrete.
- **Curb, sidewalk:** Required on both sides of the street.
- **Street grading:** Standard street cross section to the street right-of-way line on both sides of the street.
- **Street drainage:** Required.

Refer to [Figure 3-5: Asphalt Thickened Edge Detail](#)

[ 301 kb]

Refer to [Figure 3-9: Curb and Sidewalk Improvement: New Pavement for Streets without Existing Hard Surface](#)

[ 37 kb]

If the street could be extended in the future to serve additional lots, or if the street is an extension of an existing paved street, the new street shall be paved to the level of improvement shown above.

New Streets | Street Improvement Requirements | Non Arterials | Commercial

Commercial (NC1, NC2, NC3, C1, C2)

- **Roadway surface:** Portland cement concrete or asphalt concrete. Designed pavement section required in C1 and C2 zones.
- **Curb, sidewalk:** Required on both sides.
- **Street grading:** Standard street cross section to property line on both sides.

- **Street drainage**: Required.

Refer to [Figure 3-14: Full Improvements for Newly Dedicated Streets](#)

[ 39 kb]

If the street could be extended in the future to serve additional lots, or if the street is an extension of an existing paved street, the new street shall be paved to the level of improvement shown above.

New Streets | Street Improvement Requirements | Non Arterials | Industrial

Industrial (IB, IC, IG1, IG2)

- **Roadway surface**: Portland cement concrete or asphalt concrete with designed pavement section.
- **Curb, sidewalk**: Required on both sides.
- **Street grading**: Standard street cross section to right of way lines on both sides of street.
- **Street drainage**: Required.
- **Street trees**: Required.

Refer to [Figure 3-14: Full Improvements for Newly Dedicated Streets](#)

[ 39 kb]

If the street could be extended in the future to serve additional lots, or if the street is an extension of an existing paved street, the new street shall be paved to the level of improvement shown above.


New Streets | Street Improvement Requirements | Non Arterials | Downtown and Seattle Mixed Zones

Downtown and Seattle Mixed Zones

Street right-of-way and pavement widths for new streets in Downtown and Seattle Mixed Zones shall be specified by the Seattle Department of Transportation on a case-by-case basis. Contact [Street Use](#) for more information.

3.1.3 Alleys

Existing Alleys

-  [Required for Access](#)
-  [Not Required for Access](#)

New Alleys

-  [Width Requirements](#)
-  [Improvement Requirements](#)

3.1.3a Alleys, Existing Alleys - Required for Access

The Land Use Code requires the use of alleys for access in certain zones if the alley is already improved. The alley shall be considered improved for this purpose if it is paved to the width shown below:

Existing Right of Way and Pavement Widths for Alleys to be Considered to be Improved

Land Use Zone Category*	Width of Alley**
SF, LDT, L1, L2, L3, NC1	10 feet
L4, MR, HR, NC2	12 feet
NC3, C1, C2	16 feet

*When an alley abuts lots in more than one land use zone category, the zone category with the most frontage on that block along both sides of the alley, excluding SF and LDT zones, determines the minimum width. If the categories have equal frontage, the one with the greater requirement shall be used to determine the minimum alley width.

** This width is solely for the purpose of determining if an alley must be used for access.



[Right-of-Way and Pavement Width Requirements for Alleys Used for Access](#)



[Right-of-Way Improvement Requirements for Alleys Used for Access](#)

Alleys | Existing Alleys | Required for Access | ROW and Pavement Width Requirements

The permit applicant shall check the specific zone requirements in the Land Use Code to determine whether alley access is required. Alleys used for access shall be upgraded to meet the minimum right of way and pavement widths as shown:

Minimum Right-of-Way and Pavement Width Requirements for Existing Alleys Used for Access

Land Use Zone Category*	Width
SF, LDT	10 feet
L1, L2, NC1	12 feet
L3, L4, MR, HR, NC2	16 feet
NC3, C1, C2, IG1, IG2, IB, IC, All Downtown Zones	20 feet

* When an alley abuts lots in more than one land use zone category, the zone category with the most frontage on that block along both sides of the alley, excluding SF and LDT zones, determines the minimum width. If the categories have equal frontage, the one with the greater requirement shall be used to determine the minimum alley width.

Dedication Requirements

Generally, if the right-of-way width is less than the required width, a dedication equal to half the

difference between the current alley right of way width and the minimum right of way width established above shall be required. Refer to Chapter 23.53 of the Land Use Code for a full description of dedication requirements.

A partial dedication from 2 feet below to 16 feet above the established alley surface grade may be permitted by the Director of Transportation when the areas above and below the dedication are not needed for utilities or other alley purposes.

Alleys | Existing Alleys | Required for Access | Improvement Requirements

Alley improvements for all land use zones are required when the alley is used for access, as listed below:

No Requirements

- 1-2 dwelling units, if alley is unimproved but in common usage for existing residences



Partial Requirements

- 1 to 9 new dwelling units or residential lots;
- Major, minor vehicle repair uses or multipurpose convenience stores of less than 750 square feet;
- Non-residential structures of less than 4,000 square feet;
- Mixed use structures with less than 10 units and less than 4,000 square feet of non-residential use;
- Interior remodels and interior use changes;
- Additions exempt from SEPA review;
- Parking lot and open storage area expansion of less than 20% of area or parking spaces; and
- Types of small projects with reduced improvement requirements are defined in paragraph 23.53.030 E1a(1) in the Land Use Code.



Full Requirements

- All types of development not listed above

Alleys | Existing Alleys | Required for Access | Improvement Requirements

Partial Requirements

- **Dedication:** When existing right-of-way width is less than required.
- **Surface Improvements:** Adjacent to Project - Crushed rock
 - To First Connecting Street - Crushed Rock
 - To Second Connecting Streets - No improvement required
- **Alley Drainage:** Required for all portion of alley being improved
- **Alley Grading:** Standard alley cross-section at established grade for portion of alley being improved
- **Turnaround:** Required if alley is a dead end and is open to an arterial; turnaround shall be dedicated or provided by easement

Refer to [Figure 3-15: Alley Improvement](#) [ 28 kb]

Alleys | Existing Alleys | Required for Access | Improvement Requirements

Full Requirements

- **Dedication:** Required when alley right-of-way width is less than [requirements for existing alleys used for access](#).
- **Surface improvements:**
 - Adjacent to Project - Portland cement concrete or asphalt concrete
 - To First Connecting Street - Portland cement concrete or asphalt concrete
 - To Second Connecting Street -- crushed rock
- **Alley drainage:** Required for portion of alley being improved.
- **Alley grading:** Standard alley cross section at established grade for portion of alley being improved.
- **Turnaround:** Required if alley is a dead end and is open to an arterial; turnaround shall be dedicated or provided by easement.

Refer to [Figure 3-15: Alley Improvement](#) [ 28 kb]

Section 23.53.030 E1a(1) of the Land Use Code describes projects with reduced improvement requirements

When clearance between the alley pavement edge and right of way line is needed to return to existing grade at the property line, and when approved by the Director of Transportation, the alley may be paved to within 6 inches or 1 foot of the right of way line. The Transportation Department will not maintain alleys unless they are paved from street to street or improved with a turnaround. It is the responsibility of abutting property owners to maintain crushed rock alleys and dead end alleys without turnarounds.

Pedestrian easement for alley-only access: When a building lot in a residential zone does not abut a street and the sole vehicular access is from an alley, the Land Use Code requires a 10-foot wide easement providing pedestrian access from the lot to an improved street. The easement shall be paved with a walkway at least 3 feet wide when serving one or two dwelling units, and 5 feet wide when serving three or more dwelling units. Lighting as specified in the Land Use Code is required when the easement exceeds 100 feet in length. The pedestrian access easement shall not exceed 200 feet in length.

3.1.3b Alleys, Existing Alleys - Not Required for Access

Improvement requirement: There is no pavement requirement for existing alleys not used for access.

Setback requirements: When an alley is not used for access to parking or loading spaces and is less than the minimum right of way width shown below a setback is required to allow for future widening of the alley. Setback requirements are specified in Chapter 23.53 of the Land Use Code. Generally, the setback is equal to half the difference between the existing right of way width and the required right of way width specified.

Minimum Right-of-Way and Pavement Width Requirements for Existing Alleys Used for Access

Land Use Zone Category*	Width
SF, LDT	10 feet
L1, L2, NC1	12 feet
L3, L4, MR, HR, NC2, NC3	16 feet
C1, C2, IG1, IG2, IB, IC, All Downtown Zones	20 feet

* When an alley abuts lots in more than one land use zone category, the zone category with the most frontage on that block along both sides of the alley, excluding SF and LDT zones, determines the minimum width. If the categories have equal frontage, the one with the greater requirement shall be used to determine the minimum alley width.

No protest agreement: A [No-Protest Agreement](#) for future alley improvements is also required if the alley is not improved.

Grading: All structures on the lot shall be designed to accommodate the approved grade of the future alley as shown on the Building Grade Sheet. More information on grading requirements.

3.1.3c Alleys, New Alleys - Required Widths

Right-of-Way and Pavement Width of New Alleys

Land Use Zone Categories	Width
SF, LDT, L1, NC1	12 feet
L2, L3, NC2	16 feet
MR, HR, NC3, C1, C2, IC, IB, IG1, IG2, All Downtown Zones	20 feet

Note: When an alley abuts lots in more than one land use zone category, the zone category with the most frontage on that block along both sides of the alley, excluding property zoned SF, LDT, L1, and NC1, determines the required alley width. If the categories have equal frontage, the one with the greater requirement shall be used to determine the alley width.

Right-of-Way Improvement Requirements

3.1.3d Alleys, New Alleys - Required Improvements

Required Improvements for New Alleys

- **Alley surface:** Portland cement concrete or asphalt concrete for the entire length and width of alley.
- **Turnaround:** Required when alley is not dedicated through from street to street.
- **Alley grading:** Grade to standard alley section for full width of alley.
- **Alley drainage:** Required.

Refer to [Figure 3-15: Alley Improvement](#) [ 28 kb]

3.1.4 Vehicle Access Easements Across Private Property

When vehicle access to a building lot is provided by easement across private property, the easement widths specified in the Land Use Code and shown below shall be provided. If the

easement is over 600 feet long, a fire hydrant may be required.

Type of Development

1-2 Dwelling Units	
Minimum Easement Width	10 -12 feet
Pavement Width	10 feet crushed rock
Pedestrian Walkway Width	Not required
Turnaround	Yes, if easement is over 50 feet long
Clearances to SF Structures	None specified
3-4 Dwelling Units	
Minimum Easement Width	20 feet
Pavement Width	16 feet
Pedestrian Walkway Width	Not required
Turnaround	Yes
Clearances to SF Structures	None specified
5-9 Dwelling units or fewer than 10 parking spaces in non-residential zones	
Minimum Easement Width	20 feet
Pavement Width	16 feet
Pedestrian Walkway Width	Not required
Turnaround	Yes
Clearances to SF Structures	5 feet
10+ Dwelling units or more than 10 parking spaces in non-residential zones	
Minimum Easement Width	32 feet
Pavement Width	24 feet
Pedestrian Walkway Width	5 feet
Turnaround	Yes
Clearances to SF Structures	10 feet

Vehicle access easements serving one or two dwelling units shall be surfaced with crushed rock at least 6 inches in depth.

Vehicle access easements serving more than two dwelling units shall be surfaced with 3 inches of asphalt over 6 inches of crushed rock.

A 2-foot wide shoulder shall be provided on each side for clearance. Easements shall be graded to a crowned cross section with thickened edge or a "v" cross section to provide for collection of storm water. Control of storm water runoff from the easement shall meet the same drainage control requirements as the building lot. The top 12 inches of subgrade shall be prepared as specified in [Seattle Standard Specification 2.06](#).

[Approved turnarounds for easements serving residential development](#).

If you have questions please contact the [Seattle Department of Transportation](#).

3.3 Contact Information

Organization Name/Website	Phone
Department of Planning and Development (DPD) General Information	
DPD Applicant Services Center and Permit Specialists	(206) 684-8850
Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) General Information	
SDOT Street Use Division	(206) 684-5283
Seattle Parks and Recreation Real Estate Section:	(206) 233-7935

Additional contact information and resources are located in the [City of Seattle Staff Directory](#), which is searchable by Department, Division and individual staff.



Chapter 4

Design Criteria

4.1 Introduction

The design of Seattle's street right-of-way has a significant impact on the livability of the City as well as the health, safety and welfare of its citizens. The width of a sidewalk, diameter of a curb radius, number of lanes in the street right-of-way and the location of utilities such as overhead power lines and underground waterlines all play a role in shaping the street right-of-way. A street is also part of the public realm and all streets provide some form of open space including view corridors and green space in between private property and the curb.

This chapter defines the design criteria that shall be followed when designing improvements to the street right-of-way including streets, sidewalks, trees and landscaping, and utilities. Design criteria present a consistent approach to designing each element of the street right-of-way to best serve the traveling public, support land use patterns, and encourage economic growth in the City and the region. When reviewing and approving projects in Seattle's rights-of-way, the City of Seattle makes every attempt to balance the vision for a project with adopted policy, regulation and user acceptance.

The design criteria in this chapter are to be used in conjunction with other applicable City, State and National standards for street right-of-way design. More information on these standards can be found in [4.1.2 City of Seattle Standard Plans and Specifications](#) and [4.1.3 Washington State Minimum Design Standards](#).

4.1.1 Citywide Policy Guidance for Street Right-of-Way Improvements



The design criteria in this chapter have been developed consistent with appropriate local, state and national guidelines for street right-of-way design. The criteria also support citywide policy defined in companion documents to this Manual, including the City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan (2004), the Transportation Strategic Plan (2005), and the Comprehensive Drainage Plan (2005).

4.1.1a City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan

The City of Seattle [Comprehensive \(Comp\) Plan](#), *Toward a Sustainable Seattle*, is a 20-year policy plan that defines the vision of how Seattle will grow in ways that sustain its citizens' values. The City first adopted the Comp Plan in 1994 in response to the state Growth Management Act of 1990. The Comp Plan makes basic policy choices and provides a flexible framework for adapting to real conditions over time. It is a collection of the goals and policies the City will use to guide future decisions about how much growth Seattle should take and where it should be located. The Comp Plan also describes in a general way how the City will address the effects of housing and employment growth on transportation, especially in designated urban centers and villages.

The [Transportation Element of the Comp Plan](#) encourages people to use cars less than they do today. One way to do that is through the urban village strategy's goal of concentrating most new housing, jobs and services near one another in small areas, so that more trips can be made by walking, biking or transit. Another way is to support new public transit options. The Transportation Element contains policies that set the stage for street design standards that will match future street improvements to the types of uses and neighborhoods the street is serving.

4.1.1b Transportation Strategic Plan

The [Transportation Strategic Plan](#) (TSP) was updated in 2005. Linked directly to the goals and policies in the Comp Plan, the TSP outlines the specific strategies, projects and programs that implement the broader citywide goals and policies for transportation in Seattle. The TSP also includes detailed lists of projects and programs to carry out citywide transportation policy.

4.1.1c Comprehensive Drainage Plan

The City of Seattle adopted a new [Comprehensive Drainage Plan \(2005\)](#) that charts a course for how to manage stormwater in our City. The Comprehensive Drainage Plan charts a broader course for surface water management that reflects Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) strengthened commitment to protecting and, where possible, improving Seattle's surface water resources. The Plan divides SPU's drainage program into four areas:

- Stormwater and Flow Control
- Landslide Mitigation
- Aquatic Resource Protection – Water Quality
- Aquatic Resource Protection – Habitat

The Plan contains the policy guidance, levels of service and direction for capital and operating programs for each of these four areas.

4.1.2 City of Seattle Standard Plans and Specifications



The City of Seattle has developed design and construction standards for improvements in street right-of-way to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public and to minimize post-construction maintenance and repair costs. These standards shall be followed, together with the design criteria presented in this chapter and as required by the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC).

City of Seattle Standards for the design and construction of specific elements of rights-of-way improvements are contained in two publications that are referred to in this Manual by the shortened combined title, Standard Plans and Specifications:

- [City of Seattle Standard Plans for Municipal Construction](#). Individual plans from this publication are referred to in this Manual as "Standard Plan" followed by the number of the plan.
- [City of Seattle Standard Specifications for Road, Bridge, and Municipal Construction](#). Individual specifications from this publication are referred to in this Manual as "Standard Specification" followed by the number of the specification.

In the event of a conflict, Standard Plans and Specifications take precedence over the Manual. In certain cases, a deviation from the design criteria presented in the Manual may be appropriate. Get more information about the [deviation process](#).

4.1.3 Washington State Minimum Design Standards



In addition to the design criteria in this chapter and Seattle's Standard Plans and Specifications, street right-of-way design elements must also comply with the minimum design standards for major arterial and secondary arterial streets in the State of Washington. These minimum design standards are established and adopted in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 35.78 Streets – Classification and Design Standards, and have been published in the [City and County Design Standards](#).

In some cases, more stringent design standards may apply to arterial streets which have been classed either as [State Routes](#) or placed on the [National Highway System](#). In these cases, coordination with

WSDOT and Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) may be necessary to establish ultimate design criteria.

4.1.4 Deviation Process

In some cases, street right-of-way constraints or other factors may limit an applicant's ability to meet minimum design requirements. An applicant may also choose to apply for a deviation to design standards or criteria for certain elements of their project. SDOT DPD will need to consult with the applicant in the early phases of the project to determine if the deviation is appropriate and can be approved. Other entities may need to be involved in the deviation process, depending on the location and nature of the deviation request. Get more information on [how to apply for a deviation from the design criteria](#) presented in this chapter.

4.1.4a Exceptions from Washington State Minimum Standards

Per the [City and County Design Standards](#), it is noted that the professional engineer in charge of the project must evaluate each design situation, and if less than the desirable value is chosen, appropriate documentation laying out the reasons and conclusions should be placed in the project's design files.

"The City and County Design standards cannot provide for all situations. They are intended to assist, but not to substitute for, competent work by design professionals. It is expected that land surveyors, engineers, and architects will bring to each project the best skills from their respective disciplines.

These standards are also not intended to limit any innovative or creative effort, which could result in better quality, better cost saving, or both. An agency may adopt higher standards to fit local conditions.

The decision to use a particular road design element at a particular location should be made on the basis of an engineering analysis of the location. Thus while this document provides design standards, it is not a substitute for engineering judgment."

- *excerpted from the City and County Design Standards*

In any case, evaluation and ultimate approval of deviations to existing street design standards and criteria are the responsibility of SDOT.

4.1.5 Resource Documents

A number of resource documents were used to compile the design criteria in this chapter:

- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guidelines and Policies
- Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and American Public Works Association (APWA) Washington Chapter joint publication, Standard Specifications for Road, Bridge, and Municipal Construction
- Washington State City and County Design Standards for the Construction of Urban and Rural Arterials and Collectors
- Federal Highway Administration Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices
- The Seattle Municipal Code, Title 11, 15, 16 and 23
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design
- [City of Seattle Critical Areas Ordinance \(SMC 25.09.060\)](#)
- TCRP Report 19 Guidelines for the Location and Design of Bus Stops
- TCRP Report 26 Operational Analysis of Bus Lanes on Arterials
- TCRP Report 33 Transit-Friendly Streets: Design and Traffic Management Strategies to Support Livable Communities
- Sound Transit Facility Guidelines & Standards

- TriMet Bus Stop Guidelines 2002

4.2 Street Classifications and Street Types

[4.2.1 Street Types](#)

[4.2.1a Regional Connector Streets](#)

[4.2.1b Commercial Connector Streets](#)

[4.2.1c Local Connector Streets](#)

[4.2.1d Main Streets](#)

[4.2.1e Mixed Use Streets](#)

[4.2.1f Industrial Access Streets](#)

[4.2.1g Green Streets](#)

[4.2.1h Neighborhood Green Streets](#)

The City of Seattle classifies streets according to different levels of emphasis on motor vehicle movement versus direct access to property. At one end of the hierarchy, a freeway emphasizes traffic movement, while restricting access to adjacent land. At the other end of the hierarchy, a local street provides easy access to adjacent residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. A description of Seattle's street classifications is located in the **Comprehensive Plan** and further defined with maps of each classification in the **Transportation Strategic Plan**. Although street classifications do not change frequently, they are modified periodically. Any changes to traffic classifications are adopted by City Council Ordinance. Please confirm the classification of streets adjacent to a site with a plan analyst.

Seattle's traffic classifications are based on the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) standards that identify major functional classifications for all urbanized areas that have over 50,000 people.

The **Traffic Classifications** define the arterial network and include Interstate Freeways, Regional, Principal, Minor and Collector Arterial streets, Commercial and Residential Access Streets and Alleys. The **arterial network** is the "backbone" of the roadway system and accommodates the most trips for all modes.

In addition to the traffic classifications, Seattle's street classifications define networks of streets citywide that are designed to accommodate freight, transit and bicycles. A classification also exists to define Seattle's boulevard system. They are as follows:

Major Truck Streets accommodate significant freight movement through the city and to and from major freight traffic generators including Port of Seattle Terminals, inter-modal rail facilities and the regional freeway network. Major Truck Streets generally carry heavier loads and higher truck volumes.

Transit Classifications define a network of streets throughout the city that accommodate various levels of transit service.

Bicycle Classifications define an on and off street network of bicycle routes throughout the city.

Boulevard Classifications describe the existing system of boulevards, most of which are owned by the Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR). Traffic is accommodated on every boulevard and design features must be approved by both SDOT and SPR.

4.2.1 Street Types



Seattle's street classifications (refer to **Comp Plan Policies T10-T15** and TSP strategies S3-3.5) define how a street should function to support movement of people, goods and services versus access to property. However, street classifications by themselves are not an adequate local planning and design tool. The design of a street--intersections, sidewalks, and transit stops should reflect the adjacent land uses because the type and intensity of the adjacent land use directly influences how the street is used.

Street Types are not additional classifications, but provide a more specific definition of the design elements that support the street's function and its adjacent land use.

Street Classifications and Street Types provide design guidance for anyone doing work in Seattle's street rights-of-way. Refer to the table below, Identifying Street Classifications and Street Types, to assist with identifying the Street Classification and Street Type that applies to a project. Sections 4.2.1a-4.2.1h provides more information on design features that are compatible with each Street Type.

SDOT will review street designs and operational characteristics to ensure that a reasonable balance is achieved among competing uses. This role is critical in Seattle, where there is typically very limited space within the street right-of-way to accommodate the needs of pedestrians, transit, bicyclists, freight, cars, landscaping, utilities, and parking.

Not all streets in Seattle currently have a designated Street Type. Refer to SDOT's **Street Types map**.

Street Types Definition
(Reprinted from the Transportation Strategic Plan)

Name of Street Type	Street Classification	Adjacent Land Use
Regional Connector	Principal Arterial	Industrial, Commercial, Residential
Commercial Connector	Minor Arterial	Commercial, Residential
Local Connector	Collector Arterial	Residential, Institutional (community service)
Main Street	Arterial—all	Neighborhood commercial with a pedestrian designation
Mixed Use Street	Arterial—all	Neighborhood commercial
Industrial Access Street	Arterial—all, non-arterials in commercial areas	Industrial, Maritime
Green Street	Non-arterial in Downtown Seattle	Residential
Neighborhood Green Street	Non-arterial outside of Downtown Seattle	Residential

Identifying Street Classifications and Street Types

#	Information Needed	Resources
1	Is my project located on an arterial street?	Street Classification Map—Traffic Classifications. Transportation Strategic Plan 2005.
2	Does the street my project is located on have a truck, transit, bicycle or boulevard classification?	Street Classification Map—Truck, Transit, Bicycle and Boulevard Classifications. Transportation Strategic Plan 2005. Major Truck Street and Transit Classifications are an important criterion for street design, traffic management decisions and pavement

	design and repair. The Bicycle and Boulevard Classifications also define certain design priorities or additional reviews needed before a project approval can be granted.
3 My project is located on an arterial. What is its Street Type?	Street Type Policy in the Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Strategic Plan , Street Type Map and Design Guidance in this Manual, Section 4.2.1 Street Types .
4 My project is located on a local street (non-arterial) but has industrial zoning.	The Industrial Access Street Type applies to arterial as well as local (non-arterial) streets that serve industrial land uses.
5 My project is located on a designated Green Street or Neighborhood Green Street.	The Green Street and Neighborhood Green Street Types apply to local (non-arterial) streets. Also reference Green Street design guidelines in this Manual Chapter 6.2 Green Streets and Chapter 6.4 Natural Drainage Systems for streets in creek watersheds.
6 My project is located on a multi-use trail.	Street Classification Map—Truck, Transit, Bicycle and Boulevard Classifications . Transportation Strategic Plan 2005. The Bicycle and Boulevard Classifications also define certain design priorities or additional reviews needed before a project approval can be granted.

4.2.1a Regional Connector Streets

Regional Connector streets are principal arterials that link urban villages to each other and connect to regional destinations outside of the City. Although they must be accessible and attractive to all modes, they are designed to provide citywide and regional access for transit, cars and truck trips. Regional Connectors also connect designated manufacturing and industrial centers to the local and regional freight network. They move high volumes of traffic through the city and between urban villages.

Street Design Features	Character
Curb bulbs	With on-street parking, and in locations with frequent pedestrian crossings, curb bulbs may be appropriate if they are designed to accommodate the turning movements of trucks and transit vehicles.
Bicycle routes	Bicycle routes may occur on Regional Connectors if no feasible alternative route exists, Bicycle access on or parallel to Regional Connectors is important as they are often the most direct link between dense residential neighborhoods and employment centers.
Truck route signage	Signage is encouraged that directs trucks to destinations such as Port facilities, inter-modal rail yards, the regional freeway network and to Seattle's Manufacturing and Industrial Centers.
Medians	Use on streets with three or more lanes only. Medians can be continuous. Appropriate in locations where high volumes of pedestrian crossings occur and depending on left-turn movements. Medians are an access management tool and can also accomplish a variety of community goals such as limiting cut-through traffic, and environmental benefits from trees and landscaping.
Crossing islands	Use on streets with three or more lanes only. Typically a crossing tool used at a crossing location not controlled by a traffic signal.
Sidewalk width	As wide as possible to accommodate pedestrians once vehicle

	access needs are addressed. Additional sidewalk width is encouraged in the vicinity of transit zones.
Driveways	Minimize the number of driveways that cross the sidewalk to support pedestrian safety and establish a continuous sidewalk.
Street trees and landscaping	A planting strip is encouraged to provide safety through separation between pedestrians and moving traffic. They also provide environmental and aesthetic benefits. Trees in transit zones should be located to be compatible with transit passenger loading areas and maintained so as not to interfere with transit vehicle access.
Street furniture	Bus shelters are appropriate in transit zones. Wayfinding signs and other street furnishings are appropriate where street right-of-way width allows.
Pedestrian scaled lighting	Prioritize at pedestrian crossing locations, in transit zones, where there are concerns about personal security, and in where adjacent land uses support pedestrian activity.
Decorative elements	Decorative elements (including public art and special paving) may be appropriate if adequate right-of-way width exists and long term maintenance issues are addressed.
Awnings or other weather protection	Appropriate in locations where adjacent land uses support high pedestrian volumes, including transit zones.

Refer to **Figure 4-1: Regional Connector Street Type Section** [ 276 kb]

Priority Design Features

- Sidewalks buffered from moving traffic by additional sidewalk width or planting strip
- Pedestrian facilities including weather protection and lighting at transit zones and in locations where adjacent land uses support pedestrian activity
- Bicycle access accommodated if parallel route is not feasible

4.2.1b Commercial Connector Streets

Commercial Connector streets are minor arterials that provide connections between commercial areas of the city, such as neighborhood business districts. They also provide local access within urban villages.

Street Design Features	Character
Curb bulb	Curb bulbs may be appropriate in locations where there is on-street parking.
Bus bulbs	Appropriate in locations to support high transit ridership where on-street parking is a lower priority and reliable transit service.

On-street parking	Prioritize short-term visitor and resident parking when adjacent to commercial and residential land uses respectively. On-street parking should be considered after transit service is accommodated, and may be restricted during peak commuter periods.
Bicycle routes	Sign and/or stripe bicycle lanes on designated bicycle routes. Prioritize those routes that are the most direct link between dense residential neighborhoods and employment centers.
Truck route signage	Signage to assist trucks is appropriate in locations that have key freight destinations such as Port facilities, the regional freeway network and to Seattle's Manufacturing and Industrial Centers.
Medians	Use on streets with three or more lanes only. Medians can be continuous. Appropriate in locations where high volumes of pedestrian crossings occur and depending on left-turn movements. Medians are an access management tool and can also accomplish a variety of community goals such as limiting cut-through traffic, and environmental benefits from trees and landscaping.
Crossing islands	Use on streets with three or more lanes only. Typically a crossing tool used at a crossing location not controlled by a traffic signal.
Sidewalk width	As wide as possible to accommodate pedestrians in balance with vehicle access needs. Additional sidewalk width is encouraged in the vicinity of transit zones.
Street furniture	Benches, bus shelters, bike parking, and wayfinding are appropriate if the right-of-way is sufficiently wide to accommodate street furniture and still meet the needs for sidewalk width and landscaping.
Street trees and landscaping	A planting strip is desirable and provides safety through separation between pedestrians and moving traffic. They also provide environmental and aesthetic benefits. Trees in transit zones should be located to be compatible with transit passenger loading areas and maintained so as not to interfere with transit vehicle access.
Driveways	Minimize the number of driveways that cross the sidewalk to support pedestrian safety and establish a continuous sidewalk.
Pedestrian scaled lighting	Prioritize at pedestrian crossing locations, in transit zones, where there are concerns about personal security, and in where adjacent land uses support pedestrian activity.
Decorative elements	Decorative elements (including public art and special paving) may be appropriate if adequate right-of-way width exists and long term maintenance issues are addressed
Awnings or other weather protection	Appropriate in locations where adjacent land uses support high pedestrian volumes, including transit zones.

Refer to **Figure 4-2: Commercial Connector Street Type Section** [ 285 kb]

Priority Design Features

- Wide sidewalks and planting strip buffer walking area from moving traffic
- Street trees and landscaping
- Bus shelters at transit zones
- Signed and/or striped bicycle lanes on designated bicycle routes

4.2.1c Local Connector Streets

Local Connector streets are collector arterials that provide direct connections between pedestrian generators (e.g., residences, transit stops) and destinations (e.g., community centers, schools, neighborhood main streets). They are designed to emphasize walking, bicycling, and access over mobility and tend to be more pedestrian oriented than Commercial Connector Streets.

Street Design Features	Character
Curb bulbs	Use in locations with on-street parking.
Bus bulbs	Appropriate in locations with high transit ridership where on-street parking is a lower priority.
Medians	
Crossing islands	Use on streets with three or more lanes only. Typically a crossing tool used at a crossing location not controlled by a traffic signal.
On-street parking	Where sufficient right-of-way exists, on-street parking is encouraged and has benefits for residents, business districts and may provide some traffic calming effect. Should only be encouraged where transit service is not a priority.
Bicycle lanes	Sign and stripe bicycle lanes on designated bicycle routes.
Sidewalk width	Wide sidewalks support pedestrian activity and are a high priority.
Street furniture	Benches, bus shelters, bike parking, and wayfinding are appropriate if the right-of-way is sufficiently wide to accommodate street furniture and still meet the needs for sidewalk width and landscaping.
Street trees and landscaping	A planting strip is to provide safety through separation between pedestrians and moving traffic. They also provide environmental and aesthetic benefits. Trees in transit zones should be located to be compatible with transit passenger loading areas and maintained so as not to interfere with transit vehicle access.
Driveways	Minimize the number of driveways that cross the sidewalk to support pedestrian safety and establish a continuous sidewalk.
Pedestrian scaled lighting	Prioritize at pedestrian crossing locations, in transit zones, where there are concerns about personal security, and in where adjacent land uses support pedestrian activity.
Awnings or other weather protection	Appropriate in locations where adjacent land uses support high pedestrian volumes, including transit zones.

Refer to **Figure 4-3: Local Connector Street Type Section** [ 286 kb]



Priority Design Features

- Wide sidewalks with planting strips
- Signed and/or striped bicycle lanes on all designated bicycle routes
- Street trees and landscaping
- Traffic calming may be appropriate
- Bus shelters at transit stops

4.2.1d Main Streets

Main Streets are arterial streets located within the most pedestrian-oriented sections of neighborhood business districts. These arterial streets and adjacent properties have a “**pedestrian designation**” in the Seattle Municipal Code that requires new development to have pedestrian-friendly features.

Street Design Features	Character
Curb bulbs	Use in combination with on-street parking to support pedestrian activity at corners and shorten crossing distances.
Bus bulbs	Appropriate in locations with high transit ridership. Impacts to on-street parking should be considered.
On-street parking	Appropriate in business districts consistent with the goals of the neighborhood, the City and in locations after transit service is accommodated. When on-street parking exists, it is actively managed for passenger and truck loading, and short-term customer access.
Bicycle routes	Stripe and/or sign designated bicycle routes.
Medians	
Crossing islands	Use on streets with three or more lanes only. Typically a crossing tool used at a crossing location not controlled by a traffic signal.
Sidewalks	Wide sidewalks support pedestrian activity and are a high priority.
Street trees and landscaping	Wide planting strip with mature street trees and landscaping significantly enhance the street for pedestrians. Trees in transit zones should be located to be compatible with transit passenger loading areas and maintained so as not to interfere with transit vehicle access.
Pedestrian scaled lighting	Pedestrian scaled lighting lights the sidewalk and provide a consistent vertical design element to the streetscape. Prioritize at pedestrian crossing locations, in transit zones, where there are concerns about personal security, and in where adjacent land uses support pedestrian activity.
Street furniture	Benches, bus shelters, bicycle parking and signs and maps (wayfinding) are all encouraged to support pedestrian activity and comfort. Consistent design among street furniture elements can enhance the streetscape and should be considered.
Driveways	Minimize the number of driveways that cross the sidewalk to support pedestrian safety and establish a continuous sidewalk.
Awnings and weather protection	Encouraged, especially in locations where adjacent land uses support high pedestrian volumes, including transit zones.

Refer to **Figure 4-4: Main Street Type Section** [ 285 kb]



Priority Design Features

- Wide sidewalks and planting strip
- Curb bulbs in locations where there is on-street parking
- Street trees and landscaping

- Pedestrian scaled lighting
- Street furniture
- Awnings and weather protection
- Signed and/or striped bicycle lanes on designated bicycle routes
- Bike parking in business districts
- Short-term, on-street parking

4.2.1e Mixed Use Streets

Mixed Use Streets are arterials located in neighborhood commercial areas that do not have a pedestrian land use designation. They typically connect to Main Streets and have adjacent land uses that are fairly dense and mixed use. Mixed Use Streets accommodate all modes of travel with particular emphasis on supporting pedestrian, bicycle and transit activity.

Street Design Features	Character
Curb bulbs	Use in combination with on-street parking to support pedestrian activity at corners, shorten crossing distances and slow speeds for turning vehicles.
Bus bulbs	Appropriate in locations with high transit ridership. Impacts to on-street parking should be considered.
Medians	
Crossing islands	Use on streets with three or more lanes only. Typically a crossing tool used at a crossing location not controlled by a traffic signal.
On-street parking	Appropriate in business districts consistent with the goals of the neighborhood, the City and in locations after transit service is accommodated. When on-street parking exists, it is actively managed for passenger and truck loading, and short-term customer access.
Bicycle routes	Stripe and/or sign designated bicycle routes.
Medians or crossing islands	Medians or crossing islands are encouraged, where right-of-way width allows, to manage traffic, improve the aesthetics of the right-of-way and improve pedestrian crossing conditions.
Sidewalks	Wide sidewalks support pedestrian activity and are a high priority.
Street trees and landscaping	Wide planting strip with mature street trees and landscaping significantly enhance the street for pedestrians. . Trees in transit zones should be located to be compatible with transit passenger loading areas and maintained so as not to interfere with transit vehicle access.
Pedestrian scaled lighting	Pedestrian scaled lighting lights the sidewalk and provide a consistent vertical design element to the streetscape. Prioritize at pedestrian crossing locations, in transit zones, where there are concerns about personal security, and in where adjacent land uses support pedestrian activity.
Pedestrian scaled lighting	Pedestrian scaled lighting lights the sidewalk and provide a consistent vertical design element to the streetscape. Prioritize at pedestrian crossing locations, in transit zones, where there are concerns about personal security, and in where adjacent land uses support pedestrian activity.
Street furniture	Benches, bus shelters, bicycle parking and signs and maps (wayfinding) are all encouraged to support pedestrian activity and comfort.
Driveways	Minimize the number of driveways that cross the sidewalk to support pedestrian safety and establish a continuous sidewalk.

Awnings and weather protection

Encouraged, especially in locations where adjacent land uses support high pedestrian volumes, including transit zones.

Refer to **Figure 4-5: Mixed Use Street Type Section** [ 282 kb]



Priority Design Features

- Wide sidewalks and planting strips
- Curb bulbs in locations where there is on-street parking
- Street trees and landscaping
- Pedestrian scaled lighting
- Awnings and weather protection
- Signed and/or striped bicycle lanes on designated bicycle routes
- Bike parking in business districts

4.2.1f Industrial Access Streets

Industrial Access Streets are arterials and non-arterials that are adjacent to industrial and manufacturing land uses. They are designed to accommodate significant volumes of large vehicles such as trucks, trailers, and other delivery vehicles.

Street Design Features	Character
On-street parking	Load zones in locations to accommodate truck delivery.
Bicycle lanes	Parallel facility recommended to accommodate bicycle connections.
Truck route signage	Signage is encouraged that directs trucks to destinations such as Port facilities, inter-modal rail yards, the regional freeway network and to Seattle's Manufacturing and Industrial Centers.
Medians or crossing islands	
Sidewalk width	Sidewalk width must meet minimum requirements and may be wider if sufficient right-of-way exists once vehicle access needs are addressed. Additional sidewalk width is encouraged in the vicinity of transit zones.
Street trees and landscaping	A planting strip with low landscaping or high branching trees is encouraged to provide separation between pedestrians and moving traffic. Tree limbs should not interfere with truck movements. Trees in transit zones should be located to be compatible with transit passenger loading areas and maintained so as not to interfere with transit vehicle access.
Pedestrian scaled lighting	Appropriate in locations where adjacent land uses support high pedestrian volumes, including transit zones.
Awnings or other weather protection	Appropriate in locations where adjacent land uses support high pedestrian volumes, including transit zones.

Refer to **Figure 4-6: Industrial Access Street Type Section** [ 276 kb]



Priority Design Features

- Truck route signage
- Load zones to support delivery activities
- Low landscaping or high branching trees in planting strips

4.2.1g Green Streets

Green Streets are designated on a number of non-arterial streets within Downtown Seattle. Landscaping, historic character elements, traffic calming, and other unique features distinguish Green Streets from other Street Types. Refer to **Chapter 6.2 Green Streets** for a complete description of right-of-way improvements on Green Streets.

Street Design Feature	Character
Curb bulbs	Use in combination with on-street parking to support pedestrian activity at corners, shorten crossing distances and slow speeds for turning vehicles.
Bus bulbs	Appropriate in locations with high transit ridership. Impacts to on-street parking should be considered.
On-street parking	On-street parking may be appropriate to support short-term customer access, but should be limited to allow for pedestrian facilities.
Bicycle routes	Bicycles share the road with motor vehicles on these slow speed, non-arterial streets.
Sidewalks	Wide sidewalks support pedestrian activity and are a high priority.
Street trees and landscaping	Wide planting strip or double rows of street trees with mature street trees and landscaping enhance the street for pedestrians, while maintaining adequate and comfortable sidewalk width.
Pedestrian scaled lighting	Pedestrian scaled lighting that lights the sidewalk and provide a consistent vertical design element to the streetscape.
Street furniture	Benches, bus shelters, bicycle parking and signs and maps (wayfinding) are all encouraged to support pedestrian activity and comfort. Consistent design among street furniture elements can enhance the streetscape and should be considered.
Driveways	Driveways that cross the sidewalk are not encouraged.
Awnings or other weather protection	Appropriate in locations where adjacent land uses support high pedestrian volumes, including transit zones.

Refer to **Figure 4.7: Green Street Type Section** [ 283 kb]



Priority Design Features

- Wide sidewalks and planting strip
- Tight curb radii (and curb bulbs when there is on-street parking)
- Curb bulbs in locations where there is on-street parking
- Street trees and landscaping
- Driveways not encouraged in order to create a continuous sidewalk
- Pedestrian scaled lighting
- Street furniture
- Awnings and weather protection
- Bike route shared with motor vehicles

4.2.1h Neighborhood Green Streets

Neighborhood Green Streets may be any non-arterial street outside of Downtown Seattle. Similar to Green Streets, Neighborhood Green Streets emphasize pedestrian facilities, landscaping, historic character elements, traffic calming, and other unique features. Refer to **Chapter 6.2 Green Streets** for a more complete description of right-of-way improvements on Neighborhood Green Streets.

Street Design Feature	Character
On-street parking	On-street parking may be appropriate to support short-term customer access, but should be limited to allow for pedestrian facilities.
Bicycle routes	Bicycles share the road with motor vehicles on these slow speed, non-arterial streets.
Sidewalks	Wide sidewalks or walkways in areas without curbs support pedestrian activity and are a high priority.
Street trees and landscaping	Wide planting strip or double rows of street trees with mature street trees and landscaping enhance the street for pedestrians.
Drainage	Natural drainage systems are encouraged in creek watersheds. Refer to Chapter 6.4 Natural Drainage Systems for more detail.
Pedestrian scaled lighting	Pedestrian scaled lighting that lights the sidewalk and provide a consistent vertical design element to the streetscape.
Street lighting	Pedestrian scaled lighting that lights the sidewalk, especially on streets leading to schools, community centers or transit stops.
Street furniture	Benches, bus shelters, bicycle parking and signs and maps (wayfinding) are all encouraged to support pedestrian activity and comfort. Consistent design among street furniture elements can enhance the streetscape and should be considered.
Driveways	Driveways that cross the sidewalk are not encouraged.
Awnings or other weather protection	Appropriate in locations where adjacent land uses support high pedestrian volumes, including transit zones.

Refer to **Figure 4-8: Neighborhood Green Street Type Section—without Curb** [ 297 kb]

Refer to **Figure 4-9: Neighborhood Green Street Type Section—with Curb** [ 293 kb]

Priority Design Features

- Walkways and planting strip
- Street trees and landscaping
- Driveways not encouraged in order to create a continuous sidewalk
- Natural drainage encouraged
- Pedestrian scaled lighting
- Street furniture
- Awnings and weather protection
- Bike route shared with motor vehicles

4.3 Design Criteria General Notes



Conceptual sketch of the street right-of-way in a neighborhood business district showing underground utilities.

- As described in [Section 4.1.2: City of Seattle Standard Plans and Specifications](#) all elements of the street right-of-way shall be designed and installed according to City of Seattle Standard Plans and Specifications for Road, Bridge and Municipal Construction, most current edition. Please note that each Standard Plan includes one or more related Standard Specification references.
- Client Assistance Memos (CAMs) developed by DPD, SDOT and SPU are available [on line](#) or at the Applicant Service Center at DPD. [Get more information about the Applicant Service Center](#) or [contact them](#) directly.
- Please note that revisions to information in this Manual and related links are completed on a regular basis; it is the applicant's responsibility to make sure to reference the most current documents. In the case that a document has been revised more recently than the update cycle for this Manual; the most current documents supersede the information provided in this Manual.
- The Design Criteria presented in this chapter constitute a set of requirements for the design, construction and maintenance of improvements within street rights-of-way.
- The Design Considerations presented in this chapter are not requirements, but do present information that is important to consider in the design, construction and maintenance of

improvements within street right-of-way.

4.4 Grading

4.4.1 Definition

Complete and proper street grading can be a challenge in Seattle because of steeply sloping and variable topography. Construction of street improvements requires grading the right-of-way to the [standard design cross section](#) at the permanent street grade. SDOT establishes grades for permanent improvements of each street and alley to minimize (as much as possible) adverse impacts on adjacent private property.

Private developments must be designed to accommodate this planned permanent street grade so when a street is fully improved with pavement, curbs, and sidewalks, the street grade will not

- Result in driveways that are too steep;
- Require a retaining walls to protect foundations and landscaping; and
- Create the possibility of an inaccessible or unsafe condition.

4.4.2 Design Criteria



Grading for Standard Design Cross Section: The standard design cross section consists of a crowned roadway centered in the right-of-way, sloping down at 2% from the crown to the gutter line, with a 6-inch high curb and a 2% slope up from the top of the curb to the right-of-way line. See the standard design street cross section in [4.5: Design Cross Section](#). New development shall be designed to accommodate the revised design cross section.

Permanent street grades: SDOT establishes permanent street grades at the right-of-way line for most of Seattle's street right-of-way. These standard profiles are available at the [Seattle Public Utilities Records Vault](#). The approved street elevations form a design control for on-site development. In some cases, such as in steep slope areas, the graded section may not extend all the way to the right-of-way line or the roadway may be offset from the centerline. The standard profiles indicate when the grade line is not congruent with the right-of-way line.

Whether street improvements are existing, are to be installed in conjunction with the project, or will be constructed at some time in the future, driveways and other permanent on-site structures shall be designed and constructed to accommodate the permanent street elevations at the right-of-way line. If the project does not require street improvements, refer to the [Building Grade Sheet on-line tool](#) to ensure your project meets the permanent established street elevations.

Centerline Profile: The centerline profile shall have a constant slope from cross-street to cross-street, with vertical curves as needed at street intersections. Additional slope changes within the block are permitted only when a constant slope cannot be obtained or when needed to accommodate street drainage.

Maximum Slope: The project shall be designed so that any new grading on site will not exceed the maximum slope permitted if it becomes necessary in the future to adjust site grades to accommodate grading for street improvements. The maximum slope permitted without a retaining wall is two horizontal

to one vertical (2H:1V). Grades steeper than this require installation of a [reinforced concrete retaining wall](#). If the proposed roadway cannot be kept below the maximum slope the project may meet the street improvement exception criteria defined in the Land Use Code.

Survey: Because of the relationship between street grades and site grades, it is essential that survey information for both on-site and off-site improvements be based on City of Seattle datum, using City of Seattle bench marks and monuments as reference points. When no profile has been established for the streets abutting and leading to the development site, the developer shall provide a survey of the street area by a licensed surveyor for the purpose of establishing the proposed centerline profile. SDOT must approve the centerline profile of the street and accompanying centerline elevations proposed by the developer's professional civil engineer.

The survey shall extend the full length of the block plus 50 feet on either side, show adequate cross section, and be based on NAVD-88 Datum. Include City of Seattle bench mark elevations and locations, and reference field book pages and numbers. Field books containing bench mark and monument information are located in the Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) Records Vault. Get more complete information on [survey requirements](#).

Maximum/Minimum Roadway Grade: The following tables show crown elevations along the centerline of a traveled way.

Street Classification	Maximum roadway profile grade permitted
Principal Arterials	9%
Commercial Access Streets	9%
Collector Arterials	10%
Minor Arterials	10%
Residential Access Streets	17%
Alleys	17%
Surface Material	Minimum roadway centerline profile grade permitted
Asphalt roadway	1%
Concrete roadway	½%

Vertical Alignment: Vertical curves shall be based on appropriate design standards (City and County Design Standards, AASHTO or WSDOT Design Manual) and shall not be less than the following minimum vertical curves:

Roadway Posted Speed Limit	Minimum Vertical Curve
35 mph or less	3 times the design speed (V d) where V d is 5 mph greater than the posted speed limit
Greater than 35 mph	3 times the design speed (V d) where V d is 10 mph greater than the posted speed limit

Horizontal Alignment: Design speeds are established by the City Traffic Engineer based on current engineering standards and practices. A minimum horizontal radius with a maximum 4% super elevation

for urban conditions are as follows:

Design Speed	Design Radius
20 mph	125 feet
25 mph	205 feet
30 mph	300 feet
35 mph	420 feet
40 mph	565 feet


Regrading for Construction: When the area of the site adjacent to a street right-of-way is to be altered or is disturbed during construction, any regrading on the site and in the street shall be consistent with the established street elevations shown on the standard profiles. The design of on-site improvements such as foundations, footings, floor elevations, building entries, driveways, and utility service connections shall be compatible with all grading that will be required to install future street improvements. Curbs damaged during construction shall be replaced with a 6-inch high curb. This is especially critical to project design when the building and doorways are at or near the property line, where driveway slopes are at or near the maximum allowed, and where building height is at or near the maximum permitted by the Land Use Code.

4.4.3 Design Considerations



- Consult the standard profiles in the early stages of project development because private property elevations must meet the approved street elevations at the right-of-way line.
- Profiles for many Seattle streets have already been determined by SDOT, including some streets not yet open to traffic. In some cases, permanent street elevations have not yet been established and must be created by the project applicant and approved by SDOT. This will require [survey](#) of the existing project site.
- In order to make a more level and therefore more accessible crosswalk, the point of vertical curvature (PVC) should be as far from the centerline of the roadway as possible, and shall not encroach into a cross street any further than the cross street center of pavement.
- Foundations and footings shall be designed and constructed so they will not be uncovered or undermined by future grading required for street improvements.

4.5 Design Cross Section

The design cross section defines the location of the standard right-of-way elements (existing and proposed) for a project location. The standard elements are illustrated in [Figure 4-10: Standard Design Cross Section](#) [ 350 kb] and include: right-of-way line and width, roadway width, planting strip and shoulder, catch line, existing and new grade, slope line, sidewalks, street tree, curb, gutter, crown, depression line, thickened edge, pavement, water main, sanitary sewer and storm drain.

4.5.1 Links to Standard Plans and Specification

[403 Cement Concrete Alley Pavements](#)

4.5.2 Design Criteria



Required Cross Sections for Street Improvement Plans: SDOT requires that street improvement

plans include a typical dimensioned cross section. Proposed street and alley improvements require dimensioned cross sections as follows:

- every 25 feet for the length of the improvement;
- at each end of the improvement;
- at all driveways; and
- at all building entrances located within 10 feet of the property line.

All cross sections shall be stamped and signed by the Project Design Engineer.

Description of Required Elements: The design cross sections shall describe the following:

- existing and proposed grades, with spot elevations provided at the centerline;
- existing edge of pavement;
- gutter line;
- top of curb or thickened edge;
- back of sidewalk;
- property lines;
- catch lines; and
- any retaining walls or rock facing.

Elevations: Existing elevations shall be based on recent [survey data](#). Elevations on design cross sections shall be consistent with elevations shown on the street profile maps or in locations where street improvements are not required, consistent with the elevations shown on the [Building Grade Sheet](#).


Cross Slopes: The standard roadway cross slope is 2% down from crown to gutter line or edge of pavement. In areas where pavement width is being added to an existing street, the slopes may vary, when necessary, as follows:

Roadway	
Minimum	1%
Maximum	4%
Sidewalk and Planting Strip	
Standard	2% grade from the property line to the curb line

Alley cross slopes Alley cross slopes may be adjusted when it is necessary to provide access to existing driveways and garages along the alley as defined in the table in [Section 4.5.2 Design Criteria, Roadway Cross Slopes](#). Application of this cross-slope standard requires consideration of an ADA accessible route for the entire alley as defined in Standard Plan 403.

4.5.3 Design Considerations



Whenever possible, street improvements shall conform to the standard right-of-way cross section described in [Figure 4-10: Standard Design Cross Section](#) [ 350 kb].

4.6 Roadway Width

The term “roadway” refers to the area of the street right-of-way used for vehicular travel, including cars, trucks, bicycles and transit. The roadway may also include a number of additional uses such as on-street parking, curbed structures such as medians and crossing islands, and utility access points.

4.6.1 Standard Plan and Specification References

[Standard Plan 411: Curb Joints and Dowels](#)

4.6.2 Design Criteria



Roadway width on streets with curbs: Where there is a curb, the roadway width is the curb to curb width of the street. Roadway widths for various land use zones are shown in [Chapter 3.1 Overview of Requirements from the Land Use Code](#). These widths are design widths, the full roadway width deemed necessary to serve the travel and parking needs of the street for a particular land use zone when the street is fully improved with curbs and sidewalks on both sides.

Minimum pavement width — non-arterial streets: Minimum pavement width requirements are specified in the Land Use Code and shown in [Chapter 3.1 Overview of Requirements from the Land Use Code](#). The actual extent of new paving required may be less than the roadway design widths shown in Chapter 3.1: Overview of Requirements from the Land Use Code. When street improvements are required, project applicants shall construct the half street on their side of the right-of-way, plus ensure that a minimum of one paved travel lane and 5 feet of graded shoulder exist on the other side of the centerline. When new pavement is required for this travel lane, it shall be 12 feet wide including a 2-foot wide thickened edge for drainage.

Minimum pavement width — arterial streets: Minimum pavement width requirements for arterial streets must meet the minimum design standards given in the Washington State “City and County Design Standards.” Refer to [Chapter 3 Street Right-of-Way Improvement Requirements](#) for existing and required roadway widths for arterials.

Lane width for arterials: Right-of-way width, roadway width, and lane channelization shall be determined by SDOT. An applicant may choose to apply for a [deviation](#) from the standard listed below. Right-of-way and roadway widths for existing arterials are listed in Chapter 3. The following standard arterial lane widths are used in the design of arterials and are compliant with the [City and County Design Standards](#):

Lane Type	Standard Lane Width
Parking lane	8 feet
Parking lane on bus route	10 feet
Through traffic lane	11 feet
Curb lane	12 feet
Bus only lane	12 feet
Turn only lane	12 feet
Curb lane (vehicle/bicycle)	14 feet

Road taper and transitions: For permanent roadway tapers, the standard taper length for the narrowing from two lanes to one lane or offsetting of a lane is:

- $L = WS^2/60$, where L is the length of taper in feet, W is the lane offset in feet, and S is the design speed in miles per hour.
- On non-arterial streets, temporary asphalt tapers are allowed for narrowing a single lane when additional street improvements are anticipated in the future.
- On non-arterial streets, the standard taper for temporary tapers is 25:1.

Dowel Bars: Dowel bars are required in the longitudinal direction on arterial streets. When two arterial

streets intersect, dowel bars are required in both directions within the intersection.

Joints: Type B joints are required in intersections. Joints must be placed so that they do not interfere with the wheel tracks of vehicles, or in the area of the intersection used by bicycles.

4.6.3 Design Considerations

Location of roadway within the right-of-way: The roadway is normally centered in the right-of-way, but may be offset due to topography or limited right-of-way width.

Considerations for developing minimum roadway dimensions should be made within the context of how the entire right-of-way will be developed over time. This includes public safety; available right-of-way; land use and zoning, current and projected roadway capacity; pedestrian facilities, landscaping (including natural drainage where allowable), bicycle facilities, freight and transit needs, and other intended uses of the public realm.

Considerations for establishing lane widths should be influenced by street type designations and street classifications and the need to have a reasonable balance among competing uses in the right-of-way. They are as follows:

- Wide lanes support large vehicle movements such as trucks and transit. Wider lanes can also support higher speeds for all vehicles and longer crossing distances for pedestrians. Wider lanes should be considered on [Regional Connector](#) and [Industrial Access](#) street types.
- Wide center turn lanes should be considered on streets that have high volumes of truck turning movements including intersections with one or more legs that are designated as [Major Truck Streets](#) or Industrial Access streets.
- Wide curb lanes should be considered on streets that have high volumes of transit service.
- On [Commercial Connector](#) streets, lane width should support travel demand—in areas where high pedestrian activity is occurring, consider options that keep lanes as narrow as possible. On streets with high levels of transit service or that accommodate high volumes of trucks and transit vehicles, consider options that have wider lane widths.
- Narrow lanes support slower vehicle speeds, and minimize overall roadway width which supports pedestrian activity. Narrower lanes can be challenging for larger vehicles to navigate, especially on roadways that carry high volumes of trucks and transit vehicles. Narrower lanes should be considered along [Local Connectors](#), [Mixed Use](#), [Main Street](#) and [Green Street](#) street types. For Green Streets and [Neighborhood Green Streets](#), keep lane widths narrow and limit the number of lanes to minimize the crossing distance for pedestrians as much as possible.

Lane widths on designated bicycle routes shall be evaluated based on the lane width requirements given in the [City and County Design Standards](#) and [WSDOT Design Manual Chapter 1020](#).

4.7 Roadway Pavement

The most widely used pavement materials for Seattle streets and alleys are portland cement concrete (rigid pavement) and asphalt concrete (flexible pavement). Slag cement concrete as a rigid pavement alternative may be allowed or, in some instances, required.

4.7.1 Standard Plan and Specification References

[Standard Specification 2-06: Subgrade Preparation](#)
[Standard Plan 401: Residential Pavement Sections](#)
[Standard Plan 402: Commercial and Arterial Pavement Sections](#)
[Standard Plan 403: Cement Concrete Alley Pavements](#)
[Standard Plan 405: Types of Joints for Concrete Pavements](#)

4.7.2 Design Criteria



New Pavement Type: New pavement shall be of the same type (rigid or flexible) as the existing pavement when a street is being widened, extended, or replaced unless otherwise directed by Seattle Department of Transportation.

New Pavement Depth: Pavement depth is determined by a pavement design and is based on the zoning, number and type of heavy vehicles per day using or expected to use the roadway, the strength of subgrade, and the type of pavement being designed. Refer to [Section 4.6.3: Roadway Pavement Design](#).

Alley Pavement Depth:

Land Use Zone	Pavement Type and Depth
1 or 2 new dwelling units	6" crushed rock
SF, LDT, L1, L2, L3, L4, MR, HR	6" Portland cement concrete or 3" asphalt concrete over 6" crushed rock
NC1, NC2, NC3	8" Portland cement concrete or 3" asphalt over 7" crushed rock
C1, C2, IB, IC, IG1, IG2 and Downtown	8" Portland cement concrete

Pavement Thickness: For rigid pavements, a designed thickness of Portland cement concrete is generally placed over a 6-inch deep base course of Type 2 mineral aggregate crushed rock. For flexible pavements, a minimum 2-inch thickness of asphalt concrete pavement is placed over a designed thickness of asphalt concrete Class E pavement over a 6-inch depth of crushed rock.

Pavement Design: Default Design Parameters for New Pavement

Initial Serviceability Index (P _i)	4.5
Terminal Serviceability Index (P _t)	2.0
Reliability	90%
Asphalt Design Life	20 years
Asphalt Standard Deviation	0.45
Structural Coefficient Asphalt Class A and Class E	0.39
Structural Coefficient Mineral Aggregate Type 2, Crushed Rock	0.13
Concrete Design Life	40 years
Concrete Standard Deviation	0.35
Joint Load Transfer Coefficient	3.2
Modulus of Concrete Rupture	650 psi
Modulus of Concrete Elasticity	4.0 x 10 ⁶ psi
Drainage Coefficient	1.0

Pavement design for local streets in Residential and Neighborhood Commercial Zones: may be constructed using 3 inches of asphalt concrete over 6 inches of crushed rock or 6 inches of portland cement concrete.

Pavement subgrade: The pavement shall be placed on a prepared subgrade of properly compacted suitable material as determined by Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT).

Compaction of subgrade: The subgrade must be compacted to 95% of maximum dry density for all street and alley improvements. Subgrade materials that cannot be compacted to this density shall be over-excavated (removed) and the subgrade replaced with acceptable material.

Soil tests: Soil density tests may be required during construction to show that the required degree of compaction has been obtained.

Subgrade testing and analysis For designed pavements, subgrade testing and analysis by a geotechnical engineer, a traffic analysis, and pavement design calculations are required. Subgrade strength tests (CBR, k-value, R-value, etc.) shall be performed by a qualified geotechnical engineer during the course of pavement thickness design.

Pavement widening: When pavement widening is required, the width of new pavement plus any existing pavement shall yield a total width equal to half the roadway design width shown in [Chapter 3.1 Overview of Requirements from the Land Use Code](#) on the project side of the centerline, plus a travel lane and provision for drainage on the other side of the centerline.

Pavement replacement and restoration: The extent of new pavement to be installed on roadways with existing pavement depends on required pavement width and existing pavement conditions. Specific rules and requirements for new sidewalk and pavement are detailed in the [Street and Sidewalk Pavement Opening and Restoration Rules](#).

Additionally, when new street improvements are required and the existing pavement is in poor condition, it shall be replaced or restored with the following requirements:

- When the existing pavement cross slope is less than 1% or greater than 4%, the existing pavement shall be adjusted as necessary to provide a cross slope that falls within these limits.
- On Portland cement concrete streets, when the existing concrete pavement depth is less than the depth of the designed pavement, and when the panels are in poor condition, the existing pavement shall be replaced. If the existing panels are in good condition they may remain, with new pavement installed to the design depth. Tie bars for longitudinal joints and/or load transfer dowels for transverse joints may be required between new and existing pavement, depending on the condition of the existing pavement. In most cases, tie bars and dowels shall be required between new concrete panels on arterials, commercial access streets, and residential access streets used by trucks and buses.
- Existing and proposed concrete panel joints shall be shown on street improvement plans. The extent of panel replacement required shall be guided by the Street and Sidewalk Pavement Opening and Restoration Rules. The extent of pavement replacement shall be depicted on street improvement plans by shading panels, or portions of panels, to be replaced.

4.7.3 Design Considerations



Pavement design on roadways that accommodate a high volume of heavy vehicles, including [Major Trucks Streets](#), streets included in the [Transit Classifications](#), [Regional Connectors](#), [Commercial Connectors](#), and [Industrial Access](#) streets shall be designed using the 1993 AASHTO Guide for the Design of Pavement Structures.

4.8 Intersections

The design criteria in this section address elements that are typically located in an intersection. Intersections are a challenge to design and operate because they are the location where traffic turns, pedestrians cross the street, bicycles must navigate vehicle turning movements, the roadway may expand to accommodate more capacity, and medians may become turn pockets.

Curb radii and curb ramps are both important elements of an intersection. Curb ramps are located at intersections to facilitate wheelchair, bicycle, and pedestrian street crossings. In January 2003, the State informed local jurisdictions that as of April 15, 2003 all projects funded with federal funds and reviewed by the State would have to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design for construction of curb ramps. They also noted that the requirements under the ADA were not exclusive for federal aid projects. In review of the state standards and ADA compliance, the City has adopted standards which ensure compliance with ADA. Historically, a new curb ramp was required whenever more than 3 lineal feet of curb or 12 square feet of sidewalk was being added, repaired, or replaced at the pedestrian landing area. When a new ramp is installed on one side of the street, per [State Law \(RCW 35.68.075\)](#) City of Seattle compliant companion ramp shall be installed on the opposite side of the street. The new policies and guidelines will supplement the existing criteria described below.

4.8.1 Links to Standard Plans and Specifications

[Standard Plan 422a: Curb Ramp Details](#)

[Standard Plan 422b: Curb Ramp Details](#)

4.8.2 Design Criteria

Curb ramps: two compliant curb ramps with tactile warning strips are required to be installed at each impacted corner and corresponding compliant companion ramps need to be retrofitted or constructed. Curb ramps and companion ramps are required whenever more than 3 lineal feet of curb or 12 square feet of sidewalk is being added, repaired, or replaced at the pedestrian landing area. If a street is repaved or the landing modified, then curb ramps must be either be retrofitted to comply with Standard Plan 422, or new ramps must be constructed that meet the current standard.

Curb ramp locations: Curb ramps are permitted only at legal crosswalk locations, at intersections, and at marked crosswalk locations at approved mid block crossings. Legal crosswalks at intersections are defined by projections of the curb and back of sidewalk lines right-of-way lines across the street or by a line 10 feet behind the face of the curb or roadway edge when there is no sidewalk. Curb ramps at any other location in the street right-of-way are subject to the approval of the SDOT Director of Seattle Department of Transportation.

Curb radius: In general, standard curb radius standards for street intersections are as follows:

When Vehicular Turn is Illegal	10 feet
Arterial to Residential Access	20 feet
Residential Access to Residential Access	20 feet
Arterial to Arterial	25 feet
Arterial to Commercial Access	25 feet
Commercial Access to Commercial Access	25 feet
High Volume Truck and/or Bus Turns	30 feet

SDOT evaluates curb radii based on the type and volume of activity at the intersection. In all cases, with

the exception of a location where a vehicle turn is illegal, SDOT will evaluate the curb radii based on a Single Unit (SU) vehicle with a 42 foot turning radius. An applicant may propose a tighter curb radii, and will need to provide supporting documentation and have the request approved by the City Traffic Engineer. Refer to Section [4.8.3 Design Intersection Considerations](#) for more information about curb radii.

Emergency vehicle signal priority: Signal priority for emergency vehicles will be included at all new signal installations, and is typically included for traffic signals that are being modified or updated.

Bicycle accommodation: Any vaults, covers, castings, and drainage grates must be designed to accommodate bicycle travel. For more information on design criteria for bicycles, refer to [Section 4-13 Bicycle Facilities](#).

4.8.3: Design Considerations



Layout and grading of intersections: The layout and grading of an intersection must be accomplished so that water flows and the intersection is safe and accessible by pedestrians and safe for bicycle use.

Utility vault location in intersections: Do not place vaults, covers, castings or drainage grates within the crosswalk, curb ramp or landing area behind or in front of the ramp. In the event that no feasible alternative exists, SDOT will work with the applicant and Seattle City Light to determine the best possible location.

Curb ramp considerations: Curb ramps should be placed to align with the adjacent crosswalk. Issues to consider include location and placement of utility poles, hand holes, vaults, inlets, catch basins and signal controller equipment.

Any curb ramp constructed prior to January 2003 does not comply with current standards and would at least need retrofitted according to the design criteria described above.

Curb radii considerations: Curb radii should be designed based on the location and use of the intersection location and should balance the need to accommodate safe large vehicle movements with pedestrian safety:

- Tighter turn radii are appropriate at intersections that have high volumes of pedestrian crossings to support adjacent land uses. These include [Main Streets](#), [Mixed Use Streets](#), [Local Connector Streets](#), and at intersections in Urban Centers and Villages.
- Wider turn radii are typically required at intersections that experience frequent, high volumes of truck and transit vehicle turn s. These include [Regional Connectors](#), [Major Truck Streets](#) and streets that are part of the [Transit classifications](#). In these locations, curb radii will be evaluated based on the following standard design vehicle: Single Unit (SU) with a 42' turning radius. If for some reason, SDOT would anticipate a larger vehicle used in a site, a radius evaluation based on this larger vehicle would be required. Examples of typical turning templates would include a SU, W B-40, WB-50, WB-60 and WB-62.
- In locations where there is on-street parking in the receiving lane, consideration of a tighter curb radii may be appropriate and still allow for safe larger vehicle movements.

Transit signal priority: Traffic signals may be timed to respond to certain conditions at intersections. Transit Signal Priority, transit signal queue jump and other related treatments may be desirable along [Regional Connector](#), [Commercial Connector](#) and [Industrial Access](#), [Main Street](#) and [Local Connector](#) street types with high transit ridership.

Pedestrian signal priority: Traffic signals at intersections along [Local Connector](#), [Mixed Use](#), [Main](#)

[Street](#) and [Green Street](#) street types should consider enhancing pedestrian crossings including pedestrian walk phases on all legs of the intersection, countdown and/or audible signals where appropriate and elimination of pedestrian push buttons.

4.9 Driveways

A driveway is the portion of the street, alley or private property which provide access to, but not within, an off-street parking facility from a curb cut. Portions of the area defined as a driveway may also be defined as a sidewalk.

4.9.1 Links to Standard Plans and Specifications

[Standard Plan 430: Type 430 Driveway](#)

[Standard Plan 431: Concrete Driveway Placed with Sidewalk Construction](#)

4.9.2 Design Criteria



Curb cut and driveway widths: specified in the Land Use Code as follows:

- Overall requirements:
 - 23.54.030 Parking Space Standards
 - 23.53.025 Access Easement Standards
- Variations to standards:
 - 23.44.016 C.6 Single Family Parking Location and Access
 - 23.45.018 C.4.b Lowrise Parking and Access
 - 23.45.060 C.4 Midrise Parking and Access

Driveway on private property: the portion of the driveway on private property shall meet the requirements specified in the Land Use Code (refer to references above.).

Parking pad: Paving in the off-street right-of-way to accommodate parking may not exceed 8-feet by 20-feet and must meet the loading requirements set forth in Standard Plan 430 or 431. Pavement exceeding this threshold must conform to full street improvement requirements.

Vertical curves: in accordance with the Land Use Code shall be provided at the top and bottom of the driveway. The vertical curve shall begin at the property line, not in the right-of-way.

Driveway elevations at the property line shall meet the elevations shown on the Building Grade Sheet and meet the Land Use Code driveway slope and vertical curve requirements. The driveway shall be designed so that any changes in driveway slope that may be needed as a result of future grading in the right-of-way will comply with driveway requirements specified in the Land Use Code.

Refer to the following figures (per SMC 23.54.030 C.4 Parking Space Standards):

[Figure 4-11: Driveway Slope](#) [ 309 kb]

[Figure 4-12: Maximum Grade Curvatures for Driveways: Crest Vertical Curve](#) [ 291 kb]

[Figure 4-13: Maximum Grade Curvatures for Driveways: Sag Vertical Curve](#) [ 282 kb]

Driveway edges: When requested, the following information at driveway edges shall appear on both Building Permit and Street Use Permit plans:

- spot elevations at centerline of street;
- gutter line;
- top of driveway approach;
- back of sidewalk;
- property line;
- garage floor;
- driveway slope; and
- distance from property line to garage floor elevation.

4.9.3 Design Considerations

- Driveways should be placed sufficiently far from crosswalks to provide enough sight distance into the crosswalk so that drivers can see pedestrians approaching within the crosswalk and so that vehicles do not block the crosswalk when exiting a driveway.
- Refer to permeable pavement guidelines in [Chapter 6.4 Natural Drainage Systems](#).

4.10 Curbs

Curbs are a significant component of the right-of-way—they provide multiple functions including delineating the space between the roadway and streetscape, and channeling surface water into drainage inlets. New and replacement concrete curbs shall be constructed according to the Seattle Standard Plans referenced below.

4.10.1 Links to Standard Plans and Specifications

Standard Plan 401: Residential Pavement Sections

Standard Plan 402: Commercial and Arterial Pavement Sections

Standard Plan 410: Type 410 Curb

Standard Plan 411: Curb Joints and Dowels

Standard Plan 412: Extruded Curb

Standard Plan 413a: Traffic Curb Pre-cast Cement Concrete 3 foot and 4 foot Sections

Standard Plan 413b: Traffic Curb Pre-cast Cement Concrete 8 foot Section and Radial

4.10.2 Design Criteria

Curb type: the curb type used depends on the type of pavement being installed and shall be in accordance with **Seattle Standard Plans 401** and **402**. In general, a Seattle Standard Plan 410B curb and gutter is used with flexible pavement and a Seattle Standard Plan 410C doweled curb is used with rigid pavements.


Curb height: Seattle's standard curb height is 6 inches. Unless otherwise directed by SDOT, a new curb to replace an existing curb in the existing location shall be 6 inches high with a transition, if needed, to existing curb height at each end.

Permanent curb location: When an existing curb and sidewalk are removed in conjunction with demolition and construction, the new curb shall be placed in the permanent location. The permanent curb location is the edge of the design roadway width in **Chapter 3.1 Overview of Requirements from the Land Use Code**. An existing curb less than 4 inches in height shall be reconstructed in conjunction with other construction activity in the right-of-way but need not be moved to the permanent location.

Curb setbacks and pedestrian bulbs: Curb setbacks and pedestrian bulbs have been established to ensure the public's safety and allowing for street sweepers to negotiate curb line variations. The curb radii used for an 8 foot parking curb setback is 20 feet while the curb radii used for a 6 foot pedestrian

bulb is 10 feet for the radius nearest to the travel lane and 20 feet for the radius closest to the right-of-way margin.

Curb Setbacks: A curb setback is used in some situations to provide a parking lane on a street with existing curbs. It is the general policy of the City of Seattle *not* to allow curb setbacks.

Parking curb setbacks: Parking curb setbacks are not permitted on streets where parking is allowed in the existing curb lane. The installation of a parking curb setback in conjunction with a development proposal requires the approval of both the SDOT and DPD Directors. DPD reviews the curb setback from a land use perspective and SDOT reviews it from a traffic operations and street maintenance perspective. Construction of a curb setback requires a **Street Improvement Permit**. Refer to **Figure 4-14: Parking Curb Setback** [301 kb].

Construction of new curb: When a new curb or curb and gutter are constructed, it shall be located in the permanent location required for the adjacent land use zone. Additional paving shall be provided between the existing edge of pavement and the new curb, as needed. In addition, a portion of the existing roadway pavement abutting the site shall be reconstructed as needed when the **centerline grades** are not the **established profile grades**, when the existing pavement is in poor condition (indicating inadequate subgrade or pavement strength), when the **cross slope** of the existing pavement is too flat or too steep, or when the street was not graded to the **standard design cross section** prior to paving.

4.11 Sidewalks

SDOT's goal is to provide an interconnected network of sidewalks and walkways that allow pedestrians to safely access their destinations including transit stops, places of employment, recreation facilities, schools and residences.

SDOT recognizes and supports the range of benefits a well-designed streetscape provides for all pedestrians, including people with disabilities. For this reason, SDOT reviews streetscape design elements very carefully to ensure that the materials, dimensions and design elements meet safety and accessibility requirements. In addition to the aesthetic and practical benefits of a well-designed streetscape, SDOT must meet state and national safety and access standards for streetscape design.

The streetscape is broken into three parts, the Frontage Zone, Pedestrian Zone and Landscape/Furniture Zone plus Curb. The locations of these zones are defined as follows:

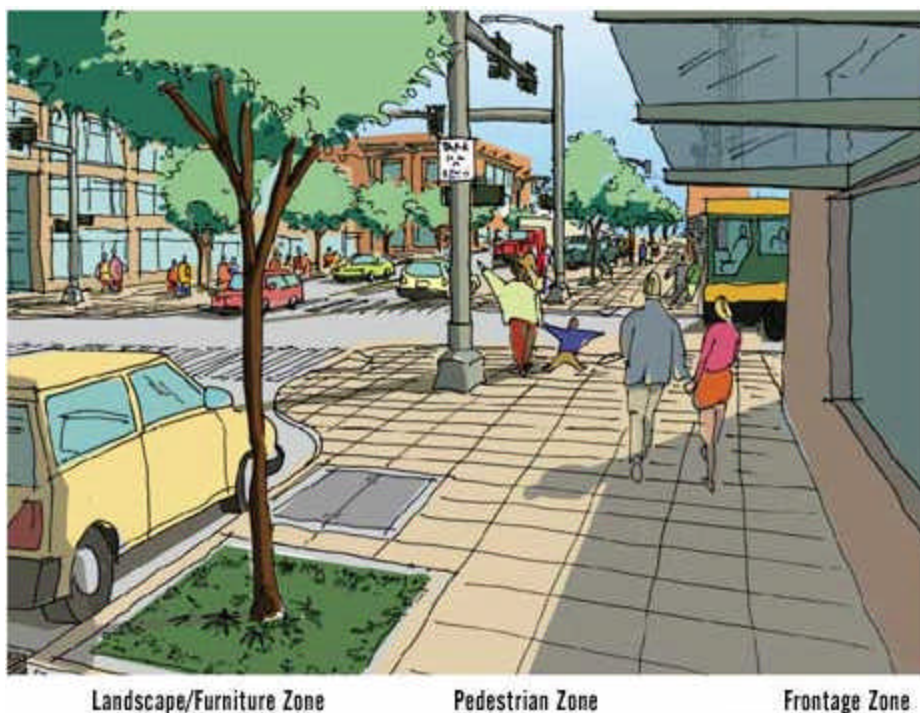
The Landscape/Furniture Zone (including the curb) is defined as the area between the roadway curb face and the front edge of the walkway. The minimum of this zone is 4 feet wide except in locations adjacent to high and intermediate capacity transit stations. Objects in the landscape/furniture zone must be setback a minimum of 3' from the face of the street curb. This zone buffers pedestrians from the adjacent roadway and is the appropriate location for street furniture, art and landscaping. It is also the preferred location for street trees, and other elements such as pedestrian lighting, hydrants and below grade utility hatch covers. Transit Zones are also located in the landscape/furniture zone and are designated for transit customer waiting, loading and alighting and may include transit signage, shelters, benches, litter receptacles, and pedestrian scaled lighting. Any landscaping or other objects proposed for this zone must comply with City of Seattle permitting requirements and design criteria.

The Pedestrian Zone is the area of the sidewalk corridor that is specifically reserved for pedestrian travel. The minimum width of this zone is 6 feet, except in locations adjacent to high and intermediate

capacity transit stations. Street furniture, plantings, and other fixed items should not protrude into travel routes.

The Frontage Zone is defined as the area between the property line and walkway. Where sufficient right-of-way exists, a frontage zone should be provided that is a minimum of 1 foot wide, except in locations adjacent to high and intermediate capacity transit stations. Frontage zones can accommodate sidewalk cafes, store entrances, retail display or landscaping. A frontage zone is not needed if the sidewalk corridor is adjacent to a landscaped space.

Streetscape Zones



4.11.1 Links to Standard Plans and Specifications

[Standard Plan 420: Concrete Sidewalk Details](#)

[Standard Plan 421: Sidewalk with a Monolithic Curb](#)

[Standard Plan 431: Concrete Driveway Placed with Sidewalk Construction](#)

4.11.2 Design Criteria

Standard construction of sidewalks: A standard sidewalk is constructed of portland cement concrete and is located at least 5½ feet from the face of the curb and 2 feet from the property line. The sidewalk may be located closer to the property line when necessary to attain the minimum 5½ foot planting strip width.

Construction of new sidewalks: On streets where the existing sidewalks are greater than 6 feet in width, the new sidewalk shall match the existing sidewalk width. On streets where the existing sidewalk is not in the standard location, SDOT shall determine the location of any new sidewalk or sidewalk replacement, based on the need for street trees and the desire to retain existing neighborhood character. New concrete sidewalks may not be installed without a curb. If a concrete

sidewalk is required and there is no curb, a concrete curb shall be installed in the [permanent location](#). In many cases, this will necessitate the installation of additional [roadway pavement](#) and [drainage facilities](#).

Sidewalk width: sidewalks shall be a minimum of 6 feet of unobstructed, linear sidewalk space that is free of street furniture, street trees, planters, and other vertical elements such as poles, fire hydrants and street furniture. Wider sidewalks are required in some cases consistent with the Land Use Code.

Sidewalk path of travel: Sidewalks should keep as much as possible to the natural path of travel parallel to the improved roadway. Ideally, they will align with the crosswalk. While sidewalks do not need to be perfectly straight, large curves that direct the pedestrian away from the natural path should not be introduced solely for aesthetic reasons.

Setback: a three foot distance between vertical objects on the sidewalk and travel lanes in the roadway is required to minimize conflicts with vehicle activity. Relocation of existing utilities may be required to meet clearance requirements. Relocation of existing utilities may be required to meet clearance requirements.

Clearance from obstructions: The sidewalk shall be clear of all vertical obstructions, such as poles, fire hydrants, street furniture, and other elements for a width of at least 5 feet. Relocation of existing utilities may be required to meet clearance requirements.

Utility access points: where practical, handholes, vaults, and other utility access points shall be located out of the sidewalk area.

Slope: Sidewalk cross slope must not exceed 2%.

Variations from standard sidewalk construction: In general, variations from standard sidewalk construction are required to meet ADA requirements. Additionally, on residential streets where natural drainage is being installed, variations will be considered based on planning and design principles defined in [Chapter 6.4 Natural Drainage Systems](#).

Sidewalks in the vicinity of transit stations: Applicants proposing new development in the block adjacent to a high or intermediate capacity transit station must accommodate high volumes of pedestrians in the vicinity as follows.

In the block adjacent to the transit station, the sidewalk shall be 18-25 feet as follows:

- **Frontage zone:** (3 feet) If the project has a plaza or other space accessible to pedestrians and free of obstructions adjacent to the property line, the frontage zone requirement may be waived.
- **Pedestrian zone:** (10-12 feet) The pedestrian zone shall consist of a paved linear walkway that is free from obstructions. The following shall be considered when establishing the dimension of the Pedestrian Zone:
 - Ridership projections for the station;
 - Anticipated pedestrian volumes from adjacent land uses;
 - Right-of-way dimensions;
 - Block length; and
 - Location of bus transfer zones.

SDOT staff will work with the applicant to make the final determination of required sidewalk width.

- **Landscape/Furniture zone plus curb:** (5-10 feet) Landscape requirements for the project defined in the Land Use Code (SMC Title 23) can be met within the Landscape/Furniture Zone (they are not additive). The following shall be considered when establishing the dimension of the Landscape/Furniture Zone:
 - Available right-of-way dimensions;
 - Urban design priorities established by the City or Transit Agency; and,
 - Direction of adopted [Street Design Concept Plan](#) or other adopted plans.
 - Improvements in these zones shall meet or exceed the accessibility requirements defined by ADA as well as applicable local and state standards.

Additional improvements within 1/4 mile of station entrance: SDOT also requires curb ramps with tactile warning strips at legal crosswalks (refer to [Section 4.8.2 Intersection Design Criteria](#)) and smooth accessible sidewalks within a quarter mile of the station entrances. SDOT will require the transit agency to assess the conditions within the quarter mile of the station entrance, and add or repair existing sidewalks and curb ramps to provide access to the stations consistent with ADA guidelines. In some cases, consistent with City policy in support of transit oriented development, a project may be allowed to meet the total required sidewalk width and include building columns in between the Pedestrian and Landscape/Furniture Zones. In this scenario, the minimum dimension of clear, unobstructed sidewalk width shall be retained within the Pedestrian Zone.

4.11.3: Design Considerations



Width: Provide adequate sidewalk width, especially at locations such as transit stops where pedestrians can be expected to congregate.

Buffers: Sidewalks and walkways should be buffered from the motor vehicle lane by a planting strip, street furniture, parked cars or a bike lane.

Visibility: No obstructions to pedestrian visibility should be present within 30 feet of an intersection or 15 feet of a driveway. These include parked cars, street trees, signal control boxes, sandwich boards, utility poles and landscaping mounds.

Obstructions: Obstructions in the sidewalk should be avoided. Whenever possible, obstructions such as poles, signs and hydrants should be placed in the planting strip or furniture zone, or behind the sidewalk. If objects such as utility poles are located within the sidewalk, a minimum five foot clearance is required from the pole to the edge of the sidewalk or walkway.

Driveways: Driveways should be designed to look like driveways, not intersections. The public sidewalk will have the right-of-way over private crossings. Driveways will be designed to accommodate wheelchair users.


Sidewalks in the vicinity of high and intermediate capacity transit stations: Consistent with the City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan policies that encourage pedestrian access to and from public transit facilities, especially in Urban Centers and Villages, the following shall be considered:


- High and intermediate capacity transit stations have unique needs for pedestrians due to the high volumes of pedestrians exiting stations and onto the adjacent streets. Transit agencies are typically required to size station plazas and waiting areas according to anticipated queuing and exiting volumes. However, the requirements do not typically extend outside the boundaries of the station site.

- The sidewalk on the street fronting the station is the primary location for high volumes of pedestrians congregating, making transfers to other modes or walking to a destination. This first block is where the need for wide sidewalks that are well-buffered from moving traffic is greatest. In some cases, anticipated pedestrian volumes, major pedestrian generators or other special conditions may require the improvements to exceed one block in length (e.g. hospitals, schools, community centers, libraries, parks)
- Additional improvements to pedestrian facilities are needed within a 1/4 mile of the station site to support and encourage safe pedestrian access (e.g. wide sidewalks, buffers, curb ramps).

Maintenance responsibility: The area between the curb and property line, including sidewalks, is the maintenance responsibility of the abutting property owner. When the existing sidewalk adjacent to a project is in disrepair or is damaged during construction, it shall be repaired or replaced by the property owner.

Asphalt pedestrian walkways: There may be locations where asphalt walkways are appropriate on non-arterial streets such as industrial zones as specified by the Land Use Code. Please refer to the figure for more detailed information.

[Figure 4-15: Asphalt Pedestrian Walkway](#) [ 380 kb] - for use in industrial zones only as allowed by the Land Use Code

[Figure 4-16: Asphalt Pedestrian Walkway 10 Feet or More From Existing Roadway](#) [ 573 kb] - for use in industrial zones only as allowed by the Land Use Code

4.12 Crosswalks

SDOT aims to provide a pedestrian network that is well connected, including good connections across roadways. A good crossing is one at which motorists and pedestrians naturally use the facility in the way it was intended. For pedestrians, this means that the natural and most direct pedestrian route will lead them to a legal crosswalk; for motorists it means that they are able to both see and understand to stop for pedestrians. The design of a crosswalk and the environment leading to the crosswalk influence these relationships.

4.12.1 Links to Standard Plans and Specifications

[Standard Plan 712: Typical Crosswalk and Stop Line Installations](#)

4.12.2 Design Criteria

Location of legal crosswalks: Legal crosswalks exist at every intersection, unless otherwise signed, regardless of whether they are marked or unmarked.

- **Standard construction of crosswalks:** New marked crosswalks should be ladder-style crosswalks that are at least 10 feet wide and designed consistent with [Standard Plan No. 712](#). Marked crosswalks should keep as much as possible to the natural path of travel. Ideally they will align with existing sidewalks. Refer to [Section 4.10.3 Curb Ramps](#).
- **Visibility:** Marked crosswalks must have a reflective surface that is visible in hours of darkness or during poor weather conditions.
- **Site distance:** No obstructions to pedestrian or driver visibility should be present within 30 feet of the legal crosswalk. These include parking, trees, and bus zones.

Orientation of building entrances to crosswalks: The manner in which new developments associate

with the street impacts pedestrians travel patterns. Entrances and access points to new facilities should orient as much as possible towards a legal crosswalk. This is especially true of facilities where frequent pedestrian travel across the street is expected. Entrances and access points that orient pedestrians towards a mid-block crossing can promote mid-block or illegal pedestrian crossings. This problem is difficult to remedy after construction is complete.

Variation from standard construction of crosswalks: Textured and/or colored concrete may be considered in certain crosswalk applications. The following design criteria apply:

- **Area of crosswalk:** At least 10 feet wide.
- **Curb ramps:** Two are required at either end of the crosswalk.
- **Smooth surface:** To reduce vibrations experienced by wheelchair users on bumpy surfaces, six feet of the crosswalk area must have a fully vibration-free texture and a limit of ¼ inch or fewer rises, not more than every 30 inches.
- **Visibility:** Thermoplastic parallel lines on either side of a colored or textured crossing maintains visibility. Street lighting upgrades may be necessary.

Given the high cost of altering or relocating any crosswalk at which textured or colored concrete is used, approval for such treatments must be received from the SDOT Pedestrian Program before construction can begin.

4.12.3 Design Considerations



The SDOT Pedestrian Program considers each request for a marked crosswalk individually. In most cases, SDOT will wait to see how people use a new facility before making a decision about a marked crosswalk. [SDOT Director's Rule 04-01](#) gives further detail about criteria for installing a marked crosswalk or a crosswalk signal.

4.13 Bicycle Facilities

Bicycles are legally considered vehicles and therefore legally allowed to operate on any public roadway except where specifically restricted. There are many features and design elements associated with traffic and signal operations that can greatly enhance the attractiveness and safety of bicycling in the roadway.

Per RCW 35.75.060 and 36.82.145, all bicycle facilities must comply with Chapter 1020 of the WSDOT Design Manual which is consistent with the 1999 AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities.

4.13.1 Links to Standard Plans and Specifications

[Standard Plan #265: Vaned Grate](#)

4.13.2 Design Criteria




Drain grates: Must be designed such that narrow tires cannot be caught. When new drain grates are installed or existing drain grates replaced, they must conform to the vaned grate design specified in Standard Plan #265.

Deck grating: Can be extremely slippery, particularly in wet conditions. Bicycle tires, with their small contact area, are extremely vulnerable to loss of traction. If deck grating must be installed, it must be treated to increase traction.

Signal detection sensitivity: Loop detector systems, and any other detection system employed such as camera-based motion detection systems, must be sensitive enough to recognize bicycles or

bicyclists. These systems should also accommodate the trend in bicycle technology which is resulting in bicycles being manufactured with decreasing amounts of metal.

Pavement markings for loop detector systems When necessary, loop detector systems should be accompanied by pavement markings which indicate the location where a bicycle should be located to maximize its disruption of the inductance field. Specifications for this pavement marking are illustrated in [Figure 4-17: Pavement Markings for Loop Detector Systems](#) [ 380 kb].

Bicycle Parking



On-street bicycle racks: Racks must have the following characteristics:

- are intuitive to use correctly;
- have a no-maintenance finish that won't chip, peel, or rust. Galvanized steel finishes are preferred;
- support the frame of the bicycle;
- allow a u-style lock to secure one of the wheels and the frame to the rack;
- allow removal of the front wheel and locking it with the rear wheel and frame to the rack;
- have a minimum height of 2.5 feet so it is not a tripping hazard;
- are installed as close to, without being directly in front of, the main entrance(s) of a building or site; and
- have adequate [clearance](#) from driveways, curb ramps, transit loading areas and immediately adjacent to shelters, and utility poles.

Get more information on [bicycle racks in business districts](#).

Private, off-street bicycle parking requirements are specified in the Land Use Code.

- 23.49.016 Downtown Parking Quantity Requirements
- 23.54.015 Required Parking
- 23.54.016 Major Institutions Parking and transportation
- 23.54.020 Parking Quantity Exceptions

Shared lane markings: The following shared lane pavement markings shall be used to denote on street facilities where bicycles are sharing the lane with other vehicles or with parked cars. : In general the lane marking illustrated in [Figure 4-18: San Francisco Chevron](#) [ 573 kb] is used when bicycles are sharing a lane with other moving vehicles. The lane marking shown in [Figure 4-19: Denver Arrow](#) [ 663 kb] is used in lieu of a bicycle lane. The Denver Arrow is typically located in locations where a wide curb lane exists for parking but there is not enough space for a bicycle lane.

4.13.3 Design Considerations

Certain physical characteristics of bicycles require that our transportation system be built and maintained in a manner so bicycles can be safely operated. These characteristics, which are more common in road-style bikes than off-road style bikes, include:

- narrow tires, down to 20mm in width;
- small contact patch with the roadway surface;
- small mass of metal (steel, aluminum, or titanium) compared to motor vehicles;
- high tire pressure, typically 100+ psi; and
- lack of suspension.

These physical characteristics require the following:

Drainage berms: Typical small-scale berms should have an average approach slope of 2%. For example, the approach to a 1.5 inch high berm should be 6 feet long. Berms with shorter approaches increase the likelihood that a bicyclist will lose control of their bicycle, especially those with high pressure tires or without any suspension.


Concrete panels: Should be aligned such that seams should be located outside of the zone that bicyclists commonly travel. For example, this zone is typically 10-12 feet from the curb when on-street parking exists.

Seam width: For new improvements, seam width between concrete panels should be no wider than .25 inch; vertical faulting must be maintained at a maximum of .25 inches.

Railroad track crossings: The minimum setback of a trail from railroad tracks/train should be 10 feet.

On-street channelization: The following features are not required but enhance the operating environment of bicycles:

- Optimal on-street striped bike lanes have a minimum width of 5 feet when adjacent to parking and 4 feet when directly adjacent to a curb or edge of roadway.
- When adjacent to parking, secondary striping is installed to delineate the parking lane from the bike lane.
- Where the edge line separating the bike lane from a motor vehicle lane is 13 feet from the curb or edge of roadway, the secondary striping should be installed no more than 8 feet from the curb or edge of roadway.
- Where the edge line separating the bike lane from a motor vehicle lane is less than 13 feet from the curb or edge of roadway, the secondary striping should be installed 7 feet from the curb or edge of roadway.
- Paint or traditional thermoplastic are not satisfactory materials for bicycle lane symbols. Pavement markings should have a thickness no greater than 75 mil and must have retro-reflective and skid-resistant properties.

Obstruction warning pavement marking: Vertical obstructions within the path of bicycle travel are not recommended, but in some cases may exist. The pavement marking described in [Figure 4-20: Obstruction Warning Pavement Marking](#) [ 284 kb] provides a visual indication to bicyclists plan for an upcoming obstruction.

4.14 Street Trees and Landscape Architectural Standards

Street trees are an integral part of the street right-of-way and the City of Seattle considers street trees as required right-of-way infrastructure. Street trees are to be maintained and preserved for public benefit. SDOT works with applicants on tree selection, installation and protection, so that street trees provide optimum functional and environmental benefits, and contribute to the economic and social health of the city.

Though governed by standards for placement and installation like most other street design elements, trees are unique, living infrastructure that, with proper management, grow in size, and in functional and monetary value over time.

The street tree design criteria in this section are based on transportation safety requirements and on minimum requirements for a street tree to achieve a mature canopy in order to effectively reduce runoff and reflected heat from paved street and sidewalk surfaces.

4.14.1 Links to Standard Plans and Specifications



[Standard Specification 8-02 and 8-14](#)

[Standard Plans Section 100: Landscape Planting](#) (includes standard plans for trees, shrub and ground cover, irrigation, tree protection and grading)

[Standard Plan 424: Tree Pit Detail](#)

4.14.2 Design Criteria



Clearances from street trees—at grade: Street trees require access to air and water, space for growth and must be managed for compatibility with the built environment. [Refer to standard clearances from trees to other objects in the right-of-way.](#)

With limited right-of-way, SDOT will evaluate site conditions and may permit one or both of the following:

- a variance from the standard clearances that will be considered based on the [street classification](#) (arterial or non-arterial), curb lane use (parking or travel lane) and recorded or projected information about pedestrian volumes for the corridor; and
- installation of a small-scale tree with a mature size compatible with spatial constraints.

Clearances from street trees—below grade: The design of street improvements must consider existing underground utilities. The standard 5 feet clearance from underground utilities is a minimum standard that is not optimum for either trees or utility lines. Where right-of-way width allows allocation of more than 5 feet, the investment to provide additional space up front often provides a long term benefit through reduced impact of tree roots on utility lines and reduced impact on trees due to utility line maintenance and repair.

Alternatively, when right-of-way width is limited such that the 5 feet clearance from utility lines cannot be met, SDOT and SPU evaluate the site conditions and may permit:

- tree installation less than 5 feet clear of lines made of ductile iron or PVC; and
- tree installation less than 5 feet clear of concrete pipes installed with rubber gaskets (post-1960).

Historical data available during site evaluation may preclude tree planting in cases where a combination of pipe condition, pipe depth, and soil properties are determined to be incompatible with the installation of trees. When the exception proposed is within 6 inches of the 5 feet clearance, SPU will be consulted prior to determining if an exception is possible to meet the code requirements.

Planting strip clearances: Maintain 5 feet 0 inches clearance between the back of the sidewalk and inside edge of the curb (5 feet 6 inches to the curb face) to allow a setback for street trees measuring 3 feet 6 inches from the centerline of the tree to the curb face and 2 feet 0 inches from the centerline of the tree and sidewalk edge.

Planting strip width: The minimum planting strip width is 5 feet 0 inches measured between the back of sidewalk and inside edge of the curb.

Planting strip treatments: Plants in planting strips vary greatly in their potential to provide optimum pedestrian and environmental benefits. Refer to the [recommended list of plant materials for planting strips](#). SDOT permits the installation of grass but encourages the installation of low (24-30 inches)

shrubs, perennial or groundcover plantings that provide a superior degree of separation between the sidewalk and street at reduced maintenance costs. Under some conditions, a combination of the plantings and grass or plantings and pavers may be appropriate depending on the street classification and need to accommodate parking in the curb lane.

Refer to [Chapter 6.4 Natural Drainage Systems](#) for guidance on integrating stormwater conveyance and treatment into the planting plan.

Planting strips—grading: The final grade of soil surfaces in planting strips must accommodate runoff from sidewalk surfaces cross-sloped to drain toward the street. In cases where a mounded planting strip is proposed to provide a more effective separation between the sidewalk and street, a centerline height of 6" above the adjacent sidewalk grade is typical and gaps between mounded areas must be provided so that backup of runoff and ponding does not occur on the paved sidewalk.

Planting strip paving: Up to 40% of the area in planting strips may be paved if the following conditions are met:

- Paving is done in combination with street trees;
- Related landscape architectural features pose no public safety concern; and
- The combination of paving and trees provides an equal or better balance of functional and environmental benefits than a fully planted condition.

Pervious pavement materials are encouraged to allow for the infiltration of runoff from the sidewalk before it enters the street to maximize the water quality entering the planting strip. Paving materials and installation details are subject to approval by SDOT.

Tree pits: are typically used as an alternative to planting strips in business districts where additional sidewalk width is important to accommodate pedestrian volumes.

When permitted as an alternative to planting strips, tree pits shall be constructed per standard plan 424, dimensioned to meet or exceed the minimum size required to meet standards. The minimum square footage for a tree pit is 24 s.f. of open area (typically 4 feet x 6 feet or 5 feet x 5 feet). Any proposal dimensioned below minimum standards shall be subject to site-specific review to ensure that:

- conditions justify the substandard size;
- the design meets public safety standards; and
- the design provides adequate conditions to support trees.

Tree pits—grading: Shall be graded to provide a soil surface 2 inches below the adjacent sidewalk and curb elevation and be top dressed with bark, wood chips, cinders, or angular aggregate material that is routinely maintained to minimize the grade differential between the sidewalk and open pit area.

Tree grates: Often proposed as an architectural design element and/or as a means to maximize the pedestrian accessible area in the right-of-way, may be permitted by SDOT. When permitted, tree grates shall be maintained routinely by the property owner to ensure a flush condition between the grate surface and surrounding pavement, to replace broken segments, and to expand the opening as appropriate to accommodate the growth of the tree.

Tree and plant material—selection: [Refer to a recommended list of tree and plant materials.](#)

Tree and -plant materials-installation and maintenance responsibilities: It is the responsibility of the property owner to ensure that the Installation and maintenance of grass, plantings and related

improvements in planting strips meet public safety and industry standards. Street tree and landscaping improvements required by the Land Use Code must be maintained to meet public safety standards for the life of the project. This includes:

- watering to ensure establishment of plant material;
- mulching; and
- pruning to ensure appropriate clearances over streets and sidewalks.

Tree protection and maintenance: A [permit](#) is required for Street Tree Removal or Pruning under Seattle City Ordinance #90047.

Proposals for removal or pruning of street trees proposed in conjunction with a building permit are subject to review and, when approved, subject to inspection by the SDOT Landscape Architect's Office.

Citizen requests for removal or pruning of street trees are subject to review and approval by the SDOT Arborist's Office. [Get a copy of the permit application.](#)

Permit applications may be required to include public notification and/or mitigation for the lost value of the tree(s) proposed for removal. In cases where the applicant is not the owner of the property abutting the proposed work, applications must include signatures of adjacent property owners. The extent of notification is determined on a case by case basis to ensure public safety and awareness and/or approval of the project. Names and addresses of contacts may be submitted for approval or provided as a component of the permit review process by the SDOT Urban Forestry. All permitted work must be completed within 60 working days unless otherwise defined by the permit.

4.14.3 Design Considerations



- Trees and related landscape architectural treatments that are strategically planned for maximum public benefit within the often limited space within the street right-of-way provide a "sense of place" critical to the vitality of neighborhoods and their business districts.
- The value of street trees to the urban environment is enhanced when they are combined with understory planting, specialized pavements, street furniture and public art.
- Planting strips serve a number of important functions including:
 - pedestrian safety--they provide a buffer between the sidewalk and roadway;
 - reduction of runoff by providing area for rainfall to infiltrate;
 - water quality by infiltrating runoff from sidewalks before it enters the street; and
 - the growth and longevity of street trees.
- Tree health and maintenance: because the standard, whether it be a 5 feet wide planting strip or 5 feet x 5 feet tree pit is not optimum to meet the horticultural requirements of a typical street tree, allocating larger areas to accommodate trees is encouraged whenever right-of-way space allows. Allocation of space is a key factor in the management of trees for compatibility with adjacent paved surfaces and other improvements, with the investment of more space up front often providing a substantial payoff in terms of reduced need for replacement or repair of paved surfaces and related improvements.

4.15 Introduction to Utilities Design Criteria

One of the important functions of the right-of-way is to provide space for water, sewer, electricity, street lighting, traffic signals and other utilities, both above and beneath the street surface. There are standard locations for each utility in relation to roadway pavement, curbs, planting strips, and sidewalks, and there are requirements for utility clearances.

The following sections define the design criteria for utilities in the right-of-way:

[4.16: Street Lighting](#)

[4.17: Street Drainage, Sewers and Storm Drains](#)

[4.18: Water Mains](#)

[4.19: Fire Protection](#)

In addition to these sections, the following design criteria apply for utility easements and relocation.

4.15.1 Design Criteria



Utility Easements

Need for utility easements: When public utilities for sewer, storm, or power facilities are constructed on private property, a utility easement will need to be granted to the City. These easements are needed to establish rights for the City including, but not limited to, construction, operation, and maintenance access as needed to own and operate the facility.

Easement width: The width of the required easements are governed by factors such as the type of utility, its depth, size or diameter, the equipment needed for maintenance, etc. Sewer, drainage, water, and solid waste easements are prepared by SPU Real Property Services. Minimum easement widths for sewers and storm drains are found in SPU Client Assistance Memo (CAM) 280: Design Guidelines for Public Storm Drain Facilities (in development).

Approvals for easements: Note that all easements (acquisition and readjustments) for City owned facilities require approval by the Seattle City Council. For utilities owned by other entities, the applicant must contact the owner to determine required approvals for easements.

Pipe location within an easement: For individual sewers or storm drains, the pipe shall be located in the centerline of the easement. The easement needs a legal description prepared by a licensed professional land surveyor in the state of Washington.

Minimum easement width: the minimum easement width is defined in SPU Client Assistance Memo (CAM) 280: Design Guidelines for Public Storm Drain Facilities. However, depending on site conditions the easement width may be determined by influence lines between the pipe and the building foundations.

Sewer and storm drains within the same easement: The minimum separation between the sewer and storm drain shall be 7 feet. The width of the easement on one side or the other will depend on pipe size and influence lines between the pipe and the building foundations (if any).

The standard pipe material within easements is Ductile Iron Pipe (DIP). It is possible with some site conditions and buildover scenarios SPU may require that a casing pipe will be used and restrained joint DIP. SPU requires a 25 feet pit on either the up hill or down hill side of said easement needs to be secured for the event that the pipe must be removed. No private connections shall be allowed within the limits of the casing pipe. Generally casing pipes should have a 5 feet minimum distance past the edge of the building in the event of a buildover.

Any acquisition and relinquishment of easements require City Council action. [Planning ahead and working with SPU Real Property Services](#) early is highly recommended in order to get all the legal documents signed and recorded in a timely manner before any work is permitted.

Plans shall be prepared and stamped by a licensed professional engineer licensed in the state of

Washington.

Utility Relocation

Need for relocation: It may be necessary to relocate or adjust existing utilities to accommodate new street grades or to attain [standard clearances](#) when constructing street improvements. This may include street lighting, traffic signal facilities, water, sewer, and drainage appurtenances. It also may be necessary to relocate curb ramps and bicycle facilities.

Site assessment: The applicant is responsible for obtaining and reviewing surveys and as-built plans, taking field measurements, and contacting the affected utilities to determine if relocation or adjustment is required and the associated costs. The cost of utility relocation and adjustment is the responsibility of the applicant.

Relocated utilities as well as new utilities to serve the development site shall be shown on street improvement plans when street improvements are required.

Pole consolidation: When installing new utilities or relocating existing utilities, it is the standard practice of the City of Seattle to reduce the number of poles where possible by combining utilities on one pole.

4.16 Street Lighting

Roadway lighting is intended to produce quick, accurate, and comfortable seeing at night that will safeguard, facilitate, and encourage vehicular and pedestrian traffic. SDOT is responsible for ensuring the proper street lighting levels and permits street and pedestrian lighting requests.

4.16.1 Links to Standard Plans and Specifications

[Standard Plans, Section 500 Signalization/Lighting](#)

[Standard Specifications, Section 8-30 Illumination and Electrical Systems](#)

[Standard Specifications, Section 9-31 Illumination and Electrical Materials](#)

4.16.2 Design Criteria



Conformance with Local, State and National Standards: The design of all electrical and lighting systems shall be in conformance with the Seattle Municipal Code and National Electrical Code, the National Electrical Safety Code, Washington State Electrical Code Chapter 296-44 WAC, and Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) recommendations.

New or relocated roadway lighting—arterial streets: New or relocated roadway lighting on arterial streets shall be designed according to criteria established by SDOT. This information can be obtained from the SDOT Electrical Design Division, 39th Floor Seattle Municipal Tower.

New or relocated roadway lighting—non-arterial streets: Street lighting for non-arterial streets shall be designed using the most recent edition of the recommended IES standards, unless otherwise approved by Seattle City Light (according to the 1993 edition of IES standards, standard values for a residential asphalt collector street are 0.6 maintained foot candles, 4:1 uniformity, and a maintenance factor of at least 0.69).

Pedestrian ways not adjacent to the roadway shall have 2.0 maintained foot candles. For additional information about lighting on non-arterial streets, contact [Seattle City Light](#).

Conduit: When new sidewalk and or curb is installed along an arterial street and no adequate conduit exists for SDOT communication or street lighting, the SDOT Traffic Engineer may require the applicant

to install these facilities.

Pedestrian lighting: Pedestrian lighting illuminates the pedestrian walkway and is typically located 12 feet-15 feet above the sidewalk. This lighting is not normally considered in the calculations for maintained foot candles and uniformity of roadway lighting. However, there are exceptions when considering the newer more efficient luminaries and their lighting output.

[Refer to Figure 4-21 Pedestrian Lighting Sections](#) [ 4 MB].

Get more information about [pedestrian lighting in neighborhood business districts](#).

4.16.3 Design Considerations

Street light and traffic signal poles, fire hydrants, and other above-ground fixtures are placed to leave sufficient clearance for pedestrian traffic. Get more information on [standard clearances](#).

In some instances, planting strips can also provide space for utilities (both above and below ground) such as power poles and electrical lines, street light poles and conduits, fire hydrants, and cable television conduits.

Good outdoor lighting can create and encourage a pedestrian friendly environment, which is especially beneficial to neighborhood business districts. Pedestrian lighting improve walkway illumination for pedestrian traffic and enhance community safety and business exposure. Lighting for pedestrians is especially important along Main Streets, Mixed Use Streets and Local Connectors, and in other locations where the land use supports large volumes of pedestrians.

4.17 Street Drainage, Storm Drains and Sewers

Street design includes provision for the collection and discharge of storm water. Drainage system components such as pipe, catch basins, and inlets are considered integral street improvement elements as are curbs, sidewalks and pavement.

When property development includes the installation of new paving or other impervious surfaces, there may be a need to improve existing drainage systems in the street to accommodate the additional stormwater flows that will be incurred. This may trigger a requirement to make [grading improvements](#), or to extend or upgrade existing storm drains, inlets, and catch basins, and there may be requirements for detention and/or treatment facilities triggered by the City Stormwater Ordinance. Factors such as the amount of impervious surface involved, the project location, the capacity of existing infrastructure, among others, play a role in determining these requirements.

All required drainage improvements shall be designed and constructed in accordance with the City of Seattle Standard Plans and Specifications which establish acceptable materials, dimensions, locations, installation and testing requirements, and other requirements for pipelines, manholes, connections, detention facilities and other system improvements. A Client Assistance Memo (CAM) is under development to provide design guidance to supplement the Standards.

Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) is responsible for the review and permitting of street drainage and treatment facilities.

The following design criteria apply for storm drains and street drainage including drainage appurtenances, sanitary and combined sewers, and side sewers and service drains.

4.17.1 Links to Standard Plans and Specifications



Storm Drains and Street Drainage

Drainage review: A drainage review will be required for street improvements which involve more than 750 square feet of land disturbing activity.

Drainage: Shall be provided for improved streets and alleys and shall include catch basins and inlets that discharge to a public combined sewer, public storm drain, or other discharge point approved by Seattle Public Utilities (SPU).

Surface drainage: Establishing appropriate street grades are very important for drainage. Standards for cross slopes and longitudinal slopes are important to keep vehicular and pedestrian safety CW and pavement surface and to convey the drainage to drainage pick up. [A standard street cross section diagram](#) shall have a centerline crown elevation. Cross slope minimums shall be met to comply with the American with Disabilities Act, and also to ensure surface drainage gets to the gutter and flows down to drainage pickups. The surface drainage must be picked up before every intersection at the uphill side of any ADA wheel chair ramp. Drainage pickups may either be an inlet or catch basin depending on the site conditions.

Public storm drains: A new public storm drain may be required when

- there is no existing public storm drain or public combined sewer, and there is no acceptable discharge point;
- to achieve adequate capacity; and
- when new pavement is installed over the permanent storm drain location and it is probable that the street will be a future public storm drain route.

New public storm drains shall be sized to handle all upstream tributary area from the drainage basin in which they are located. They shall be designed to be continuous with existing and future storm drain pipes that are or will be part of the storm drainage system. The engineer shall provide the hydraulic calculations used in the pipe design for review by SPU. Refer to [Chapter 6.4 Natural Drainage Systems](#) for guidance on providing a natural drainage conveyance system.

Storm drain pipes: New storm drain pipes shall be designed in accordance with the criteria shown in SPU Client Assistance Memo (CAM) 280: Design Guidelines for Public Storm Drain Facilities.

Storm drain water quality systems: Are generally site specific designs. For City owned systems, SPU Design and maintenance and operations may require specific improvements and access requirements.

Stormwater detention: In areas served by a combined sewer or storm drains of inadequate capacity, and riparian corridors, stormwater detention will be required for new and replaced impervious areas exceeding 2000 square feet, in accordance with the [Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code \(SMC 22.800-22.808\)](#). Storm Drain detention systems shall be either off line system or in line system as approved by SPU. Standard pipe material for detention systems located within the City right-of-way and owned and operated by SPU shall be concrete or ductile iron pipe. Refer to [Standard Plan 272](#).

Stormwater treatment: If the new impervious areas exceed 5000 square feet, or the combined new and replaced impervious areas exceed one acre, there will be requirements for stormwater treatment. (See storm water code for street specific impervious surface requirements). Public treatment facilities are

installed in the street, and upon successful inspection they are turned over to SPU for operation and maintenance. Guidance for the design of these facilities is provided in [SPU Director's Rules 26-2000 and 27-2000](#).

Stormwater code compliance for street improvements: Street improvements shall comply with the requirements of the stormwater code. This includes street paving projects.

Sanitary and Combined Sewers

Location of public sewers: Public sewers shall be located in the centerline of the row and street at a minimum 12 foot of depth. The minimum pipe diameter shall be 8 inches. The standard pipe material shall be concrete pipe. All tees shall be 6 inches minimum. Sometimes it is advantageous to lay new side sewers to the curb line or property line whenever possible to avoid digging a newly paved street.

Extensions or upsizing of sanitary or combined sewers: May be required in order to provide service for projects that develop or rehabilitate certain properties. For public sewer extensions, all new sewers shall be designated sanitary. In a combine sewer area, it is illegal to build new sewer and have it designated a combine sewer, for this particular situation the developer shall be required to build both a sanitary and storm drain with the storm drain temporary tied into the combine sewer where the extension begins in the event that the combine sewer area may be separated in the near future.

Detention of stormwater flows: Additionally, new or replace paving or other impervious surfaces trigger code requirements for detention of additional stormwater flows to combined sewers.

Side sewers and service drains: The pipeline between the building and the sewer or storm drain main is a side sewer or service drain, respectively. All side sewer and service drain work within the right-of-way requires a [Street Use Utility Permit](#) issued by DPD on behalf of SDOT.

Minimum grade, pipe size and materials, connection details, installation and testing requirements: Side sewers and service drains shall be designed and installed in accordance with City of Seattle Standard Plans and Specifications, latest edition.

Ownership: Side sewers and service drains are owned and maintained by the property owner. The minimum grade is 2%, 6" minimum size, pipe material shall be according to an approved standard listed in SPU Client Assistance Memo (CAM) 280: Design Guidelines for Public Storm Drain Facilities (in development). New core taps shall be per the [core cut procedure](#).

Use of existing side sewers: It is possible to use existing side sewers in lieu of a new connection in some cases. It is highly recommended that the property owner's contractor will provide a t.v. inspection and advise the property owner prior to deciding.

Connections: Generally, a proposed connection is of the same size as the sewer or storm drain, a new MH will be required, and it is possible that a sewer capacity analysis report will be required for SPU approval. Any proposed connection pipe that is bigger than the main shall not be allowed.

Street restoration: SDOT is responsible for street restoration for side sewer and service drain installation and maintenance.

4.17.3 Design Considerations



Build-overs: For build-overs for SPU owned sewer and drainage appurtenances, the applicant shall

follow the guidance of [SPU's build-over document](#).

Inspection: Inspection of drainage improvements may be by DPD, SDOT or both. DPD will not issue the building occupancy permit until the pipe is formally accepted by SPU. The installer should arrange with SPU to inspect the pipe and obtain approval for the installation prior to pavement restoration.

Location to allow future repairs or new connections: Other utilities shall be placed so they are not directly parallel over sewer and/or storm drain lines in order to allow digging down for future repairs or new connections.

4.18 Water Mains

New water mains are subject to the approval of [Seattle Public Utilities \(SPU\) Water Engineering](#).

4.18.1 Links to Standard Plans and Specifications

[Standard Specification 1-07](#)

[Standard Specification 9-30](#)

[Standard Specification 7-10.3\(5\)C](#)

[Standard Specification 7-11](#)

[Standard Plan 030: Standard Locations for Utilities \(Residential Street\)](#)

[Standard Plan Section 300: Water Main Appurtenances](#)

[Standard Plan 286a and 286b: Sewer and Water Spacing and Clearances](#)

[Standard Plan 330a and 330b: Water Main Thrust Blocking Vertical Fittings](#)

4.18.2 Design Criteria



Water main design and pre-design meeting: Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) Water Engineering division provides design criteria for water mains at a required [pre-design meeting](#) that will be scheduled by [SPU Utility Service Teams](#).

SPU and other agencies may stipulate conformance to water main requirements and to other utilities. For the purpose of uniformity all projects will require a [DPD Master Use Permit \(MUP\)](#) application. Also, the Applicant should contact Seattle Public Utilities staff for anticipated work within the right-of-way that may impact existing water mains or water facilities.

Protection of existing facilities: special measures to protect existing or proposed facilities may be required depending on scope and impact of the proposed water main project. Special protection measures may include but not exclusively the use of restrained joint pipe, corrosion protection, and construction methods.

Water main plans and submittals: The plans for water mains and appurtenances shall show:

- all appropriate physical features adjacent to the proposed water mains;
- horizontal and vertical controls;
- hydrant coverage; and
- other utilities such as gas mains, sanitary and storm sewers, manholes, etc., including horizontal and vertical separation distances.


Design details for other utilities that do not affect the water main will not be shown on water main plans. Refer to the [SPU CADD standards](#).

The Project Engineer must show that all water main projects meet the requirements and that evidence of

approval be provided to the jurisdiction in charge.

Pipe material: All materials for water distribution shall be new and conform to Standard Specifications Section 9-30.

Standard location for water mains within the street right-of-way: Water mains will be generally located on the north and east side of the street right-of-way, or as approved by the SPU Engineer. In the event that the standard location for water mains is not available SPU Water Engineering will provide guidance in the best alignment available.

Water valves: Water valves will generally be placed aligned with the perpendicular right-of-way margins, as shown in [Figure 4-22: Typical Valve Location](#) [ 313 kb]. If this location is otherwise unavailable SPU Water Engineering will appoint the alternative position. SPU Water Engineering will approve the final location for all water components constructed in the City right-of-way.

Water main, sewer and other utilities separation: Water mains and water service lines shall be protected from the following:

- sanitary sewers;
- storm sewers;
- combined sewers;
- house sewer service connections;
- drains;
- sanitary sewer force mains; and
- other utilities.

Spacing between water mains and other utilities should comply with City of Seattle Standard Specifications 1-07, and [Standard Plans](#) 286a and 286b.

Depth of pipe cover: All pipe shall be laid to a minimum depth as indicated in Standard Specification 7-10.3(5)C and Standard Plan No. 030.

Thrust block: Provide concrete thrust blocks at points where piping changes directions or at dead ends. Thrust blocks shall be designed and installed as indicated in Standard Specification 7-11. Also, thrust blocks must conform to Standard Plan Nos. 330a and 330b.

For pipes larger than 12 inch diameter, and where water pressures are higher and/or soil conditions are poor, the Developer Engineer should design the correct block size. All thrust block designs will require the approval of SPU Water Engineering prior to installation.

Test pressure for field testing water main pipe: Field pressure testing for water mains shall be in accordance with Standard Specification 7-11. Field hydrostatic testing of various diameter ductile iron water main pipes and appurtenances shall be:

Test Pressure for Field Testing Water Main Pipes

Diameter Pip (inches)	4	6	8	10	12	16 or larger
Test Pressure (psi)	300	300	300	300	300	250

Flushing and disinfection: Before being placed in service all newly installed pipe, valves, hydrants and

appurtenances shall be flushed, disinfected and kept clean, and an acceptable bacteriological report shall be obtained. Flushing and purification shall be in accordance with Standard Specification 7-11.

Vault location: Prior to water service approval, SPU Customer Service shall coordinate all works associated with installation of service vaults. The table below provides some preliminary information. SPU Water Crews will perform all service work.

Water services: For further inquiries regarding water services contact [SPU Water Service Resource](#) or the [SPU Utility Service Teams](#).

- Get more information on [water service standard charges](#)
- Get more information on [metering](#)
- Get more information on [drinking water rates](#)

Vault Location by Meter Size and Type

Vault Meter Size and Type	General Location in the ROW	
Domestic		
3/4" & 1" Domestic	See City of Seattle Std. Plan #286b	
1 1/2" & 2" Domestic	See City of Seattle Std. Plan #286b	
3" & 4" Domestic	Vault plan required (installation by SPU Crews) contact SPU Customer Service	
6" Domestic		
Fire		
2" DC Fire Service		
4"-10" x 3/4" DC Fire Service		
Combination		
4" Combination Service		
6" Combination Service		
8" Combination Service		

4.18.3 Design Considerations



- Consider how to maintain fire flow during construction activities.
- Coordination with SPU water operations is required for all new connections, services, meter installations and any temporary cut and caps or temporary mains to facilitate your construction.
- Provide notice to the Fire Department if flow will be impeded and what provisions have been made – also notice if access at the site will be limited or if street access will be limited.
- Be sure to check for utilities in the project alignment especially around large service locations as they could interfere with water mains, blocking, or meter vault installations.
- Only SPU crews are allowed to operate the existing water system for public health and safety reasons. Plan to coordinate with SPU water crews well in advance of starting construction to have your work added to crew work schedules.

4.19 Fire Protection

4.19.1 Links to Standard Plans and Specifications

[Standard Specification 7-14: Hydrants](#)
[Standard Plan 310a and 310b: Type 310 Hydrant Setting Detail](#)
[Standard Plan 311a and 311b: Type 311 Hydrant Setting Detail](#)
[Standard Plan 312: Fire Hydrant Marker Layout](#)
[Standard Plan 313: Wall Requirements for Hydrants](#)
[Standard Plan 314: Fire Hydrant Locations and Clearances](#)

4.19.2 Design Criteria

Hydrant pressure: [Seattle Fire Department Administrative Rules](#) require that any single hydrant provide 2000 gpm (1000 gpm for single family dwellings) at minimum residual pressure of 20 psi. Design and construction of fire protection features should comply with [Seattle Fire Code](#) and Standard Plans and Specifications.

Hydrant resets, relocations and adjustments: Resets, relocations and adjustments require 4-6 weeks advance notice. Please contact [SPU Water Engineering](#). Refer to [standard charges for hydrant resets, relocations and adjustments](#).

Fire flow requirements: The Seattle Fire Department and SPU Water Engineering will authorize all designs impacting fire flow. The following requirements apply:

- Required FF 1000 gpm (single family)
- Required FF 4000 gpm (commercial)
- Required FF 8000 gpm (major institution)

Fire hydrant Locations: Fire hydrant locations must conform to Standard Specification 7-14 and Standard Plan 314.

Use of fire hydrants under non-firefighting conditions: Temporary use of a hydrant by private individuals, businesses or organizations will be allowed under certain conditions. To this extent, Seattle Public Utilities will control use of all hydrants within the distribution system. In accordance with SPU Policy & Procedure item SPU-SEC-0004 temporary water service from the distribution system, for less than six months, may be authorized via a hydrant use permit or hydrant use meter issued by SPU Customer Service. For information regarding Hydrant Permits contact the [SPU Utility Service Teams](#).

Refer to a [listing of water service permit charges](#).

4.19.3 Design Considerations

- During survey activities, be sure to note the location of existing hydrants and work to space your hydrants appropriately.
- Hydrants should not be placed next to driveways or other private access points where they may impede existing access.
- Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) supplies all hydrants. Please contact SPU Customer Service for more information.
- Changes to fire service including street access during construction require coordination with the [Seattle Fire Department](#).

4.20 Clearances

Clearances are the minimum distances between elements in, under and above the street right-of-way. Clearance requirements are a key factor in how space within the right-of-way and on private property adjacent to the right-of-way can be used. Maintaining appropriate clear distances between certain elements in the right-of-way and on private property is necessary for a variety of reasons. Safety is a key consideration—for the traveling public, the property owner and for operations and maintenance crews who must access elements in the right-of-way for routine maintenance or repair. Appropriate clearances also enable the proper growth and development of trees and landscaping, and help protect and maintain both overhead and underground utilities.

This section describes required lateral and vertical clearances as well as special circumstances where additional clearance requirements may apply. The minimum clearances defined in this section are requirements. When minimum clearances can not be met due to site condition constraints, the City staff will work with the applicant to determine an acceptable solution. Deviations from the standard clearances in this section are considered on a case by case basis and are evaluated by SDOT, SPU and other departments as needed.

4.20.1 Links to Standard Plans and Specifications



Standard Plan 030: Standard Location for Utilities (Residential Street)

4.20.2 Design Criteria



Standard Lateral Clearances

From	To	Standard Clearance
Curb face	Closest part of any fixed object (excluding traffic control signs and parking meter posts)	3 feet
Edge of sidewalk	Closest part of any fixed object (excluding traffic control signs and parking meter posts)	1 feet
Textured surface of wheel chair ramp	Closest part of any fixed object (excluding traffic control signs and parking meter posts)	1 feet
Edge of sidewalk	Stair riser	2 feet
Pole face, fire hydrant	Closest part of any fixed object (excluding traffic control signs and parking meter posts)	5 feet
Stop sign	Nearest parking space	30 feet
Obstruction in sidewalk	Closest part of any fixed object (excluding traffic control signs and parking meter posts)	6 feet
Multi-use trail, edge of pavement	Closest part of any fixed object (excluding traffic control signs and parking meter posts)	2 feet (3 feet preferred)

Standard Vertical Clearances

From	To	Standard Clearance
Roadway surfaces	Any horizontal projection over named surface	20 feet (may be reduced to 16.5 feet in certain cases)
Sidewalk surfaces	Any horizontal projection over named surface	8 feet
Roadway surfaces	Tree limbs	14 feet

Alley surfaces	Any horizontal projection over named surface	26 feet (to allow for garbage truck lifts)
Bicycle path surfaces	Any horizontal projection over named surface	10 feet

Trees: For more information about clearances and trees, including conditions for deviating from the standard clearance listed below due to site constraints, refer to *Section 4.15.2 Clearances from Street Trees*. Factors to consider for a deviation from the standard required clearances between street trees and utilities may include the depth and age of the pipeline, the possible use of root barriers, the nature of the plantings, fire code requirements, and other factors.

Standard Clearances from Trees

From	To	Standard Clearance
Centerline of Tree	Face of curb	3.5 feet
	Sidewalk or sidewalk landing	2 feet
	Driveway (measured from edge of driveway at sidewalk)	7.5 feet
	Centerline of streetlight poles	20 feet (varies according to type of tree)
	Centerline of fire hydrants	5 feet
	Centerline of utility poles	10 feet
	Extension of cross street curb at an intersection	30 feet
	Underground utility duct, pipe or vault	5 feet (except ducts and gas pipes as shown on Seattle Standard Plan 030 for residential streets)
	Roadway edge	10 feet (where no curb exists)

Railroad clearances: Certain requirements apply if a project is in the on, over, under, or in the vicinity of land or facilities owned and/or operated by railroad operators. There are three reference points for determining clearances: 1) the franchise agreement for a particular piece of railroad in the right-of-way; 2) state requirements; and 3) federal requirements. Whether state or federal (or both) requirements apply depends on the track classification and function.

Standard Clearances from Railroad Facilities

From	To	Standard Clearance
Centerline of railroad track	Any obstruction 6" or more in height	Minimum lateral clearance of
		8.5 feet (10 feet desired). This clearance shall be increased 1.5 inches for every degree of track curvature
	Sidewalk or sidewalk landing	2 feet
	Driveway (measured from edge of driveway at sidewalk)	7.5 feet

Minimum clear distance above a railroad track shall be 23 feet.

If your project is on or adjacent to property owned by railroad operators, contact the operator for information about required clearances or additional permit requirements.

Bicycle parking clearances: In addition to the clearances defined in the table below, bicycle parking facilities must not encroach upon a minimum of 6 feet of clear sidewalk space. Narrow racks such as the inverted-U rack, must have a total minimum combined clearance of 6' around the rack, measured from any point on the rack.

Standard Clearances from Bicycle Parking

From	To	Standard Clearance
Bicycle parking	Curb when adjacent to parking	3 feet
	Curb when adjacent to vehicle travel lane	2 feet
	Street trees and street furniture for the rail-type rack	1 foot

Electrical utility clearance requirements: Applicants who are developing a new project must pay attention to the potential conflicts between existing electrical facilities in the street right-of-way and their new building during project planning, design, demolition and construction. The following criteria applies:

Minimum horizontal and vertical clearances between overhead power distribution and buildings or other structures: The Seattle City Light (SCL) Overhead Power Distribution requires a minimum horizontal and vertical clearance from buildings and structures. The purpose of this clearance is to keep the general public and workers without high voltage electrical expertise out of harms way. Clearances also provide adequate space for qualified electrical workers to operate safely and efficiently during construction and long term operations and maintenance activity. Additional clearances are required to allow for regular building maintenance such as window washing activities.

Zero lot line developments: Zero lot line developments often run into clearance problems with high voltage overhead and underground electrical facilities and wires. Land use setback requirements alone, for example when minimal front yard setbacks are allowed, are likely not adequate to account for required clearances from overhead electric utilities. Note that clearances are also required where electrical facilities are located in alleys. Thus proposed buildings may need to be located further back from property lines to accomplish required clearances. The attached drawing and information provide some additional general information.

Permit applicants must adhere to electric utility clearance requirements. Please contact Seattle City Light to arrange a meeting as early as possible in your design process. We recognize that each proposed development location, adjacent utilities, streetscape, and development request is unique. Even if poles and wires are not immediately adjacent to your property at this time, it is best to assume clearances are needed until you meet with Seattle City Light and verify otherwise. The City is growing. Additional and relocated infrastructure will be needed to serve this demand.

Refer to *Figure 4-23: Seattle City Light Utility Clearance* [ 1 MB].

Electrical facilities and driveways: If an existing power pole or underground vault is in the middle of the future driveway, the applicant will be required to pay SCL, in addition to providing SCL with sufficient lead time, to reconfigure or to relocate its electrical facilities to resolve the conflict(s).

Electrical service entry points: It is also beneficial, financially and schedule-wise, for the applicant to

pay attention to the electrical service entry point for the new building relative to SCL's facilities in the street right-of-way. The farther the service entry point from SCL's facility, the more complicated, time consuming and costly the service installation will be.

Underground ordinance areas: Certain areas in the City have been designated as 'underground ordinance' areas. There is still a fair amount of overhead electrical distribution facility in some of the recently declared underground ordinance areas. Regardless of whether the existing electrical distribution system in the underground ordinance areas are overhead or underground, the electrical services to developments in these areas are required to go underground. Please contact other overhead utilities such as telephone and cable TV companies for their undergrounding requirements in these areas.

Easements: Occasionally, if space, or the lack of, precludes SCL from serving the building(s) directly from its system in the street right-of-way, easement(s) from the property owner(s) or their neighbor(s) may be required for placing a local distribution system, which may include, but not limited to poles, anchors, wires, vaults, handholes, or conduits, on site.

Further guidance and contact information: The *Requirements for Electrical Service Connection Manual*, which is currently being updated, will be available as a service installation guide for homeowners, developers.

SCL and DPD staff will work closely with you to accomplish appropriate clearances required for design, during construction and at final build-out. Communication and resolution of required clearances are critical to final design and construction approval of your proposal. Contact *City Light Customer Engineering* for more information regarding service requirements.

4.20.3 Design Considerations



The applicant is advised to document the existing site conditions early in the design phase to identify any elements that may have a required clearance to help avoid possible costly site modifications during permitting.

4.21 Structures Within the Right-of-Way

A structure is designed for spanning a distance to distribute load. The design of structures such as rock facing or concrete retaining walls, and stairways in the right-of-way shall conform to accepted engineering practices and be performed by or under the direction of a professional structural engineer. All designed structural systems require the approval of the SDOT Director. Submittal for approval shall include detailed plans, design calculations, and relevant survey and geotechnical information.

Some structures in the right-of-way are installed to benefit the public, built according to approved plans and specifications and then owned and maintained by an appropriate public entity such as: SDOT, Parks, Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), FFD or other public entities. Each public facility owner may have an acceptance policy by which the final construction is judged prior to approval. Other structures are installed to benefit development of property and are maintained by the adjacent property owner. These other structures may require an annual renewable permit and an indemnity agreement, insurance, and routine inspections.

4.21.1 Links to Standard Plans and Specifications



[Standard Plan 141: Rock Facing](#)

[Standard Plan 440a and 440b: Cement Concrete Stairway & Handrail](#)

[Standard Plan 441: Cement Concrete Steps](#)

[Standard Plan 442: Steel Pipe Handrail](#)

[Standard Plan 443a and 443b: Steel Pipe Railing for Bike Path](#)

4.21.2 Design Criteria



Retaining walls, slopes Cuts and fills along the edge or end of a roadway occur when the existing ground elevations differ from the proposed roadway elevations. A retaining wall system is required if the elevation difference cannot be maintained with maximum allowable ground slope per design standards. Slope stability shall be maintained at all times during the construction of the wall system. Common methods used include temporary cut slopes, temporary shoring, or temporary shotcrete.

During construction, access rights from adjacent property owners may be needed. A negotiation for these rights by the developer needs to begin as soon as the need is discovered. SDOT will provide the needed document for signature by the affected property owner giving the right to enter private property for the scope of the construction and maintenance.

When the soils are determined to be stable, erosion facing such as rock facing or decorative stackable masonry blocks may be all that is needed to protect that slope. When soil is determined to need support, there are a variety of wall designs that can support soil such as retaining walls or soldier pile walls.

Other structural soil (i.e., geoweb soil wrap) walls may be designed where no utilities or excavations would be anticipated. Permission to use these types of walls is rare due to the future utility uses and the no-dig zone space required for the soil mass. Erosion facing is required for these types of walls.

Erosion facing (with stable slope) non-structural: Rock facing may be used only if the soil slope being protected is stable without the proposed rock facing. The maximum height of "rock facing" slope protection is 8 feet. For soil conditions that will not allow rock facing slope protection and for heights greater than 8 feet, reinforced concrete retaining walls are required and shall be designed to handle the soil conditions.

All rock facing shall be at least 3 feet clear of the sidewalk, unless otherwise approved by the SDOT Director. Rock facing design and construction shall conform to Seattle Standard Plan 141. Any proposal needs to be accompanied by a designed plan, a geotechnical report and a document describing Standard construction details.

Alternate erosion facing may include stackable masonry blocks, jute matting, etc. Any near vertical erosion facing needs to meet the same slope and clearance criteria as rock facing and requires the approval of the SDOT Director.


Retaining walls, design and construction: Reinforced concrete cantilever retaining walls shall be designed and constructed in accordance with [Standard Plans for Road and Bridge Construction, Washington State Department of Transportation, M21-01\(HD\)](#). Alternate wall designs and proprietary wall systems will require approval by the SDOT Director. All retaining walls shall be at least 2 feet clear of the sidewalk, unless otherwise approved by the SDOT Director, and 3 feet clear of the curb face where there will be no sidewalk. Barriers, railings or fencing at the top of these walls may be required to provide safety.

Soldier pile walls: Reinforced concrete cantilever retaining walls constructed using vertical elements such as soldier pile walls may be needed due to certain soils types and the lack of available right-of-way for the standard wall designs above. shall be designed by a structural engineer. These walls shall have a reinforced concrete face and may be constructed with shotcrete or formed and poured in place. The design for these walls will typically need: weep holes plus drainage behind the wall; contraction / expansion joints more frequently than privately maintained walls and earthquake spacing / seismic

joints.

A geotechnical report is required as well as structural calculations. All retaining walls shall be at least 2 feet clear of the sidewalk, unless otherwise approved by the SDOT Director, and 3 feet clear of the curb face where there will be no sidewalk. Barriers, railings or fencing at the top of these walls may be required to provide safety.

Stairways / ramps: Stairways in street right-of-way shall be designed according to Seattle Standard Plan 440.1. Treads shall be 11 inches minimum and 12 inches maximum. Riser height shall be 5 inches minimum and 7 inches maximum. A minimum 5 foot landing shall be provided after each 20 risers. The first riser shall be at least 2 feet clear of the public walk. Pedestrian lighting shall be provided for stairways.

Handrails and pedestrian rails: Railings shall be designated as "handrails" or "pedestrian rails" and their usage shall be as determined by [Figure 4-24: Determination of Hand Rails vs. Pedestrian Rails](#) [ 409 kb].

Handrails shall be designed in accordance with Standard Plan 442 or 443, as appropriate.

Pedestrian rails shall be designed in accordance with criteria established by the SDOT Director, in compliance with guard requirement of the International Building Code (IBC), meaning that they shall have a maximum spacing of 4" for vertical elements of the railing.

Traffic barriers: Vehicular railings on bridges shall be designed in accordance with AASHTO standards. Vehicular railings on retaining walls shall be designed in accordance with AASHTO standards unless otherwise approved by the SDOT Director. Vehicular guardrails on approaches to structures shall be designed according to Washington State Department of Transportation standards. For guardrails not on structures, the SDOT Director will determine the type of guardrail required.

Pedestrian overpasses / underpasses and skybridges Pedestrian overpasses and underpasses typically span a transportation right-of-way and provide a connection between destinations that have a high volume of pedestrian use. Pedestrian overpasses shall be designed in accordance with criteria established by the SDOT Director. Skybridge permit policies are defined in the [Seattle Municipal Code, Section 15.64: Skybridge Permits](#). SDOT requires AASHTO standard designs over the street and IBC at connections to buildings on private property.

Areaways: Use the IBC for structural design with 250 lbs/sf live load for sidewalk top. Include curb ramps in the surface of the areaway to mimic Standard Plan 422 at intersections (including "T" intersections).

Bridges Bridges shall be designed in accordance with AASHTO Standard Specifications for Highway Bridges.

Other structures Sign support structures and streetlight poles shall be designed in accordance with AASHTO Standard Specifications for Structural Supports for Highway Signs, Luminaires, and Traffic Signals.

4.22 Turn arounds and Cul-de-Sacs



When an existing right-of-way is not platted through from street to street, or when topography or other conditions preclude a street from being improved to its full street-to-street length, a cul-de-sac or other vehicular turnaround shall be provided. Cul-de-sacs are required at all street dead ends, and turnarounds are required at private access easement dead ends.

4.22.1 Links to Standard Plans and Specifications


N/A

4.22.2 Design Criteria

Determination of through street: The DPD Director, in consultation with the SDOT Director, shall determine when a street does or does not have the potential to become a through street. Dedication of additional right-of-way width may be required to accommodate the turnaround.

Cul-de-sac and turnaround design: Refer to [Figure 4-25: Cul-de-sacs](#) [ 383 kb] for passenger vehicle cul-de-sac designs and [Figure 4-26: Alley and Easement Turnarounds](#) [ 418 kb] for turnaround designs approved by the SDOT Director. Alternate designs may be proposed through a deviation request and are subject to the approval of the SDOT Director.


Turnarounds for non-residential zones: Shall be designed to accommodate the types of vehicles using the street, alley, or easement. Maximum longitudinal slope permitted for a cul-de-sac or turnaround is 5%.

Alley turns and turnarounds: Turnarounds are required at alley dead ends when the connecting street is an arterial. [Figure 4-27: Alley Turns](#) [ 347 kb] illustrate alley turns that are approved by the SDOT Director for SF, L1, and L2 zones. All other zones will need individual review. The turn shall be designed to accommodate the types of vehicles using the alley. Alternate designs may be proposed through a deviation request, subject to the approval of the SDOT Director.

4.22.3 Design Considerations

The Fire Department may require additional criteria for cul-de-sacs or turnarounds and alley turns or turnarounds when needed for adequate fire access.

4.23 Traffic Operations

All traffic control devices, such as traffic signals, traffic signs, or channelization shall conform to the Federal Highway Administration's Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Any revisions or additions to requirements specified in the MUTCD are subject to approval by the SDOT Director. Normally, modifications, additions, and installation of traffic control devices will require appropriate documentation of need. Refer to [Figure 4-28: Channelization Plan Checklist](#) [ xx kb].

4.24 Transit Zones

Transit Zones include passenger waiting, queuing and boarding uses in the sidewalk area as well as bus layover or staging uses along curb spaces in the street.

- It is important to design transit facilities and amenities that will attract transit patrons and accommodate their movements between destinations and transit services.
- Transit zones should be easily identifiable, safe, accessible, secure, and provide a comfortable waiting area for transit passengers while providing for pedestrian sidewalk circulation and through block connections for pedestrian travel.

New development must coordinate with SDOT and King County Metro Transit for the installation, relocation and/or removal of transit zones and or/facilities, including bus layover or staging areas. Contact [Metro Transit's Transit Route Facilities Supervisor](#).

4.24.1 Links to Standard Plans and Specifications

[Standard Plan 423: Bus Shelter Footing](#)

4.24.2 Design Considerations

Design guidelines are to be used for the design of transit facilities, the placement of transit passenger amenities, and to describe the process for developing transit facilities:

- Transit zones should be accessible. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) considerations will be given top priority in the siting and design of new and existing transit zones. Transit zones should consist of an accessible pathway and a wheelchair lift landing pad that are free from obstructions.
- Transit signage placement, equipment, service and schedule information will be provided for by King County/Metro Transit and authorized by SDOT.
- Transit zones are common places to find street furnishings and street lighting. Transit shelters and other amenities, including pedestrian scaled lighting, benches & litter receptacles must be consistent with transit agency priorities, standards and criteria.
- Utilize and/or design overhangs, canopies, and building arcades to provide weather protection for transit patrons, including leaning rails, benches and pedestrian scaled lighting. The design of overhead weather protection should be coordinated with the lead transit agency.
- Use of bus bulbs or pullouts must be done with careful consideration of transit speed and reliability and overall traffic operations.
- For safety, consider transit stops on the far side of the intersection.
- Locate transit stops to assure comfort, convenience and safety for all transit users, including pedestrians, cyclists and people with mobility impairments. Consider well placed, well lit locations with good site distance in close proximity to crosswalks.
- Transit zones will be spaced to maximize the efficient operation of transit service while not requiring riders to walk more than an eighth to a quarter of a mile to the transit zone.
- King County/Metro Transit requests pre-design coordination and requires plan review for projects adjacent to transit corridors, zones and facilities. [Contact Metro Transit's, Transit Route Facilities Supervisor.](#)
- Contact King County/Metro Transit's Office of Construction Coordination for construction impacts to transit corridors, services, zones (including bus stops and layovers) and trolley overhead system.

4.25 Street Furniture, Public Art and Unique Objects in the Street Right-of-Way

Street furnishings, public art and other pedestrian and bicycle amenities are important elements that can create a comfortable, safe and attractive public realm. Examples of street furnishings include benches, litter and recycling receptacles, bike racks, multiple publication newsracks, water fountains, pedestrian scaled lighting and planters. Public art includes art installations that have a functional component and art that is purely aesthetic. Some types of street furnishings such as automated pay toilets, public kiosks and other atypical amenities are referred to as 'Unique Objects' because they require special location and design considerations.

The intent of this section is to promote consistency, predictability, safety and design excellence in the type and location of public realm amenities located in the right-of-way. Get more information on *street furniture*.

4.25.1 Links to Standard Plans and Specifications

N/A

4.25.2 Design Criteria

To ensure user comfort and safety the arrangement of elements in the sidewalk corridor should include

a landscape/furniture zone, a pedestrian zone and a frontage zone.

Accessibility consideration: Pedestrians with vision impairments can detect objects mounted on walls or posts if they are installed so that the leading edge is less than 27 inches above the sidewalk. Items mounted above this height should not project more than 4 inches into any circulation route. Particular care should be taken to locate temporary signage so that it does not impede pedestrian travel.

Locating public art in the right-of-way: The Seattle Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs (SOACA) is responsible for public art in the right-of-way. Like other types of street furnishings, public art should be located outside the Pedestrian Zone unless it is integrated into the walking surface.



Frontage, Pedestrian and Street Furniture/Zones
(photo courtesy of Shelley Poticha)

Locating unique objects in the right-of-way: Unique objects in the right-of-way include privately funded public art, commemorative plaques, memorials, automated pay toilets, bus shelters, special furnishings, wayfinding signage and community bulletin boards. SDOT staff will evaluate applications and serve as the first point of contact for proponents with advice from the Seattle Design Commission. SDOT will also serve as the coordinating agency between the Design Commission, Arts Commission, Office of Urban Conservation, and other appropriate review authorities. Refer to additional information on project review [here](#).

Any street furniture, public art or other unique objects in the right-of-way require an annual street use permit.



Public Art—Unique Objects in the Right-of-Way

4.25.3 Design Considerations

Special pavement: Used appropriately special pavement, including tile, brick and finish treatments such as exposed aggregate, can increase the quality of the pedestrian environment. Design considerations include ensuring that pavement is durable, slip resistant, and free of trip hazards. A further design consideration is the ease of accommodating future pavement cuts and restorations.

Street trees: Street trees and landscaping are a highly desirable part of the pedestrian environment and an important complement to street furnishings. Typically street trees are located in the Planter Furniture zone. For more information on street tree integration refer to *Section 4-14 Street Trees and Landscape Architectural Guidelines*. *Note: the use of above grade planters is encouraged only where below grade conditions or other constraints right-of-way tree pits.*

Seating: Successful outdoor seating requires thoughtful design and placement. Seating should be designed to encourage appropriate use and be located to maximize user comfort and utility. Consider integrating seating into art installations or hardscape. Seating should generally face the pedestrian zone.

Sidewalk cafes: A sidewalk cafe is an open-air seating area on a public sidewalk used by restaurant patrons while consuming food or beverages provided by an adjoining restaurant. Sidewalk cafes can provide vitality and interest to the sidewalk environment and are encouraged where they can be accommodated. Get more information on the *design and approval of sidewalk cafes*.

Maintenance agreements: The City of Seattle will require a maintenance agreement for the artwork and may also require insurance and a hold harmless agreement, depending on the artwork and the site location. Get more information on *maintenance agreements*.

Examples of Public Art Seating



Louis Longi, 1999



Jorg Dubin, 2000



4.26 Contact Information

Organization Name/Website	Phone
Bicycle Facilities	(206) 684-7583
Clearances	(206) 684-5283
Crosswalks	(206) 684-7583
Cul-de-sacs and Turnarounds	(206) 684-5283
Curbs	(206) 684-5283
DPD—City Design	(206) 684-0763
Driveways	(206) 684-5283
Fire Protection	(206) 684-5976
Intersections	(206) 684-5283
SDOT Policy, Planning and Major Projects Division, Planning, Street Classifications, and Street Types	(206) 615-0872
SDOT Street Paving, Roadway Pavement	(206) 233-0044
SDOT Street Use Division	(206) 684-5283

SDOT Street Use Division, Design Cross Section	(206) 684-5283
SDOT Street Use Division, Grading	(206) 684-5283
SDOT Street Use Division, Roadway Width	(206) 684-5283
SDOT Urban Forestry Division	
Seattle Municipal Tower	
PO Box 34996	
700 5th Avenue, Suite 3900	
Seattle WA 98124-4996	
Seattle Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs	(206) 684-7171
Seattle Public Utilities (SPU)	(206) 684-5976
Utility Service Teams	(206) 684-5800
Seattle Municipal Tower	
700 5th Avenue Floor 31	
Seattle, WA 98104	
Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) Records	
Seattle Municipal Tower, 47th Floor	
Sidewalks	(206) 684-7583
Street Lighting	(206) 684-5197
Street Drainage, Storm Drains and Sewers	(206) 386-0028
Street Furniture, Public Art and Unique Objects in the Right-of-Way	
Street Trees and Landscape Architectural Features	(206) 233-7829
Structures within the Right-of-Way	(206)-684-8325
Transit Zones	(206) 684-5283
Water Mains	(206) 684-5976

Additional contact information and resources are located in the [City of Seattle Staff Directory](#), which is searchable by Department, Division and individual staff.



Chapter 5

Construction and Maintenance

5.1 Introduction

Both public and private construction may require use of the street right-of-way for activities such as utility installation, roadway work, and project staging. Access through construction zones and to residences, public properties and businesses during construction must also be accommodated.

This chapter includes information or links to other resources that must be considered when doing construction or maintenance work in the street right-of-way including:

- Traffic control plans;
- Construction coordination;
- Pre-construction activities;
- Inspections and construction activities;
- Maintenance and repair of property frontage, including sidewalks, street trees, landscaping and utilities;
- Acceptable, restoration of street and sidewalk pavement openings;
- Temporary erosion and sediment control; and
- Safe work sites.

In many cases, construction and maintenance in the street right-of-way will require one or more permits, especially if a street or street right-of-way closure is proposed. The City of Seattle issues permits for the construction of improvements in the street right-of-way and inspects new improvements, including roadway and utility work and the installation of street trees and landscaping. The City also works proactively to coordinate utility work within the street right-of-way to make the most efficient use of resources and minimize the impacts to the traveling public.

5.2 Traffic Control Plans for In Street Work

SDOT requires a traffic control plan be submitted with a Street Right-of-Way Improvement Permit application when:

- The project will involve a complete arterial street closure or a detour; or
- Moving traffic lanes will be closed during peak hours (6:00-9:00 A.M. and 3:00-7:00 P.M. in the Central Business District, and 7:00-9:00 A.M. and 4:00-6:00 P.M. elsewhere); or
- Traffic control cannot be made to match exactly sketches within the [City of Seattle Traffic Control Manual for In Street Work](#) (Traffic Control Manual); or
- Other special circumstances exist as determined by the City Traffic Engineer.

The [Traffic Control Manual for In Street Work](#) defines the basic principles and standards to be observed by all those who perform work within a street right-of-way so that:

- Work areas are safe and effective;
- Vehicular and pedestrian traffic is warned, controlled and protected; and

- All traffic is expedited through the work zone to the extent possible.

Consistent with the standards defined in the [Federal Highways Administration's Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices \(MUTCD\)](#), the Traffic Control Manual defines the following:

- required components of a traffic control plan;
- the circumstances under which a traffic control plan is required as a permit condition for work that takes place in or adjacent to the street right-of-way;
- the appropriate type and location of traffic control devices;
- procedures for obtaining permission to work in the street right-of-way;
- requirements for pedestrian access, control and protection;
- detours and street closures;
- emergency work;
- constraints on time of construction to accommodate time of day traffic volumes; and
- standard barricades and signing illustrations.

The Traffic Control Manual is produced and maintained by SDOT's Traffic Management Division. Refer to the [Traffic Control Manual website](#) for more information.

5.3 Coordination Activities

Construction and maintenance activities in the street right-of-way typically require coordination with many agencies, including federal, state and local authorities. Coordination with some agencies may require the project applicant to provide advance notification so that any necessary reviews and approvals are in place prior to City permits being issued.

In 2003, the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) launched the [Right-of-Way Management \(ROWM\) Initiative](#). This initiative was designed to better manage the competing needs of those who need to work in the street right-of-way, and those who need to travel through the street right-of-way.

The Utility Coordination Improvement (UCI) project is part of the ROWM Initiative. The project is focused on improving the coordination of street and utility work in the street right-of-way. The [Planning, Analysis, Coordination Tool \(PACT\) database](#) and its accompanying map tools were developed to augment these coordination efforts. The PACT system tracks projects and coordination efforts. Information on project locations, coordination groups and moratoriums is available and updated twice yearly in April and July.

Additional information on notifications relative to contractor activities can be found in [Seattle Standard Specification 1-07.28 Notifications Relative To Contractor's Activities](#).

5.4 Pre-Construction Activities

In the interest of public safety and convenience, a Street Use Permit may contain certain conditions that are specific to the location where the work is being performed. These may include constraints on the time of day that work can be done in consideration of traffic patterns in the area and the specific nature of the construction proposed.

Prior to construction, a City inspector will perform a pre-condition site visit to evaluate the site. Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) requires a schedule of contractor and subcontractor work activities to be completed on all construction projects that impact the street right-of-way. The schedule needs to include the following information:

1. A description of the work to be done and by whom;
2. Exact location of work within the street right-of-way;

3. The start and anticipated end date of all work to be completed;
4. The anticipated sequencing of the installation of facilities;
5. If work is to be performed at more than one work location or across more than one intersection, complete items 1, 2, 3 and 4 for each location and/or intersection; and
6. A restoration schedule.

Any changes, updates or revisions to the contractor or subcontractor schedules need to be submitted to [SDOT's Street Use Division](#).

A pre-construction meeting will be held either at the project site or at SDOT offices, depending on the size and scope of the project, to review the contractor or subcontractor schedules and confirm other construction-relation information.

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5.5 Inspection and Testing Procedures

[5.5.1 Demolition and Grading During Construction](#)

[5.5.2 Shoring, Excavation, and Safety Systems During Construction and Inspection](#)

[5.5.3 Protection of Trees and Other Vegetation During Construction](#)

[5.5.4 Acceptance/Warranty Procedures and Record Drawings](#)

All contractor permits issued by the City are subject to inspection. City of Seattle inspectors are responsible for enforcing various ordinances and Director's Rules, City Standard Plans and Specifications, Street and Sidewalk Pavement Opening Policy, and the Traffic Control Manual procedures.

Inspections help the City ensure that all construction, public safety and convenience, and permit

requirements are met as approved. Get more specific information about inspections, [names and contact information for inspectors](#), as well as guidance for testing procedures.

Additional special inspectors (such as Geotechnical Engineers, Structural inspectors, Seattle Department of Transportation's (SDOT) Urban Forestry Division or material testing) may be required to be available during construction to provide reports and recommendations to the contractor and Street Use Inspectors.

5.5.1 Demolition and Grading During Construction

One of the first activities that occurs during construction is grubbing (removing material from the project site such as soil, pavement or vegetation) and grading (changing the surface of the ground). Typically, two things are needed before demolition, moving soil or grading:

1. Installation and approval of [erosion and sediment control](#) measures including protection measures for trees and other vegetation to be retained; and
2. Providing a survey to establish the designed elevations of the sub grade or surface of the improvement.

Excavating and placing soils may require soils to be transported to an acceptable disposal site and/or importing soils from an approved source.

Any work in the street right-of-way must be executed to minimize impacts to existing trees unless otherwise permitted in advance (refer to [Section 5.5.3 Protection of Trees and Other Vegetation During Construction](#)).

Any work within the street right-of-way that would remove, adjust, destroy or otherwise make a Survey Point or Monument no longer visible or readily accessible will be required to obtain a [Department of Natural Resources](#) (DNR) Survey Monument Permit (Permit to Remove or Destroy a Survey Monument). Coordination with SPU Survey unit regarding street monumentation will be required as well. For more information on required datum, refer to the [Seattle Public Utilities Survey website](#) (especially Client Assistance Memo (CAM) 401 Notes 4 and 21).

5.5.2 Shoring, Excavation, and Safety Systems During Construction and Inspection

Shoring is a means of supporting the earth in a trench or vertical cut for building and roadway construction or other underground installation activities. Underground construction may require a ground support system that employs methods other than shoring. There are many types of shoring and ground support techniques for earth reinforcement or support.

Any excavation 3 or more feet deep that is in or adjacent to the street right-of-way, or any excavation that is within a one horizontal to one vertical (1H:1V) descending slope line adjacent to the street right-of-way must have a support system that provides support to adjacent structures, underground installations, surface improvements, and the sides of the excavation. Ground support is required for any underground construction. Excavation as defined in [Ch 19.122 Revised Code of Washington \(RCW\)](#), whether by open cut or trenchless technology method, shall not damage underground installations, surface improvements, or adjacent structures.

Excavations that are classified as a trench are required to have a safety system (refer to the requirements defined in the [Washington State Administrative Code \(WAC\) 296-155 Part N](#). Additional requirements for safety systems apply to underground construction (refer to the requirements defined in [WAC 296-155 Part Q](#)).

Properly installed shoring for excavations are critical for maintaining the structural integrity of the adjacent roadway structures and underground utility infrastructure. Shoring review and inspection of

Utility and Street Improvement Permits is done by SDOT through the permitting process. The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) and SDOT have combined shoring review so that there is only one approval granted in order to make the process more convenient for the applicant. For more information, refer to the [Street Use Shoring Review website](#).

The WAC has a number of regulations addressing shoring and excavations that depend on site specific conditions. Refer to the [City of Seattle Standard Specification 7-17.3\(1\)](#) for more specific information on general trench shoring requirements, and [Seattle Standard Specification 7-10.3 \(7\)](#) for trench shoring regarding water mains.

5.5.3 Protection of Trees and Other Vegetation During Construction

Requirements for the proper protection of trees and other vegetation are provided in [4.14.2 Tree Protection and Maintenance](#). Protective measures must be installed and maintained as a component of the project erosion and sediment control plan.

5.5.4 Acceptance/Warranty Procedures and Record Drawings


Once informed by the Applicant that the improvement work is complete, an SDOT Inspector will do a final inspection. If there are no unresolved issues after the final inspection, the project will be accepted as complete. Ad applicable, the SDOT inspector will then notify the DPD Inspector that the Applicant has complied with the Street Improvement requirements as defined in the permit conditions. The DPD Inspector may then issue a Certificate of Occupancy, or a temporary Certificate of Occupancy, whichever is applicable.

A one-year bond period commences from the acceptance date. All surety bonds for street right-of-way improvements are kept for a year to ensure that all improvements remain functionality for that period. After one year, the Inspector returns to the project site to inspect for any apparent workmanship shortcomings that may qualify as safety defects. If the area is safe, then the bond is released and the project considered closed.

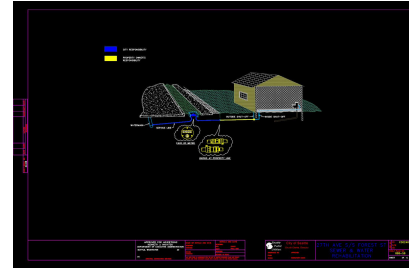
The City of Seattle is responsible for keeping records drawings on file as defined by the [Revised Code of Washington \(RCW\) Chapter 19.122](#). Records of all permanent improvements to the street right-of-way are kept in [SPU's record vault](#). Before issuance of a Street Right-of-Way Improvement Permit, a signed copy of the final plan set is forwarded to the record vault. If any changes are made to the plan during construction, an as-built drawing is prepared and sent to the record vault to be incorporated into the permanent record. The public has access to these permanent records for future improvements and for maintenance activities.

5.6 Maintenance Agreements

There are numerous surface elements in the street right-of-way that require regular or periodic maintenance. Maintenance responsibility for these elements varies. Typically, the City of Seattle is responsible for the area between the curbs. With the exception of trees and other landscape improvements installed by the City of Seattle and/or otherwise recorded in the inventory maintained by the Seattle Department of Transportation's (SDOT) Urban Forestry Division, the adjacent property owner is responsible for the area between the curb and property line, including the sidewalk.

The City maintains public utilities that have been installed to serve the general public. The property owner is responsible for maintenance of service lines to their properties. Get more information on [Side Sewers](#). Property owners are also responsible for the portion of their water service that extends from the union generally located at their property line to the shutoff valve of their residence or business. The City is responsible for the portion of the water service that extends from the union to the water main, including the meter and service line. Refer to [Figure 5-1: Water Service Responsibility Diagram](#) [ 565 kb], which illustrates City and property owner responsibilities regarding water service.

If a property owner or project applicant desires a unique feature be installed as part of their project (e.g., special paving materials, street furniture, or unique landscaping). SDOT may require a maintenance agreement and a hold harmless agreement. The purpose of these agreements is to clarify that the maintenance responsibilities for certain elements of the street right-of-way lie with the private property owner. In some cases, a bond may be required to deal with removal of a unique structure in the future if necessary. Approved maintenance agreements become part of the property deed that is recorded with the King County Assessor's Office.



[Enlarged Version](#) of Figure 5-1:
Water Service Responsibility

5.7 Street and Sidewalk Pavement Opening Restoration Rules

The Pavement Opening and Restoration Rule (PORR) describes the requirements that applicants, contractors, and city crews shall meet when making or restoring openings within the street right-of-way. Refer to a full copy of [the Rule](#). An update of the rule is anticipated in 2005.

5.8 Temporary Erosion Control, Sediment Control, and Spill Control (Best Management Practices)

The primary focus of construction stormwater planning is to prevent sediment and other pollutants associated with construction activity from impacting soil, air, and water quality. Such impacts can increase project costs through regulatory and legal fines, and through repair of site damage that causes delays to project delivery.

Temporary erosion and sediment control (TESC) and spill prevention control and countermeasures (SPCC) plans are required to adequately and systematically identify and minimize project risk. Together, the TESC and SPCC plans satisfy the construction stormwater pollution prevention requirements for all projects that require stormwater site plans. All projects that disturb soil must comply with the TESC elements, and apply appropriate best management practices (BMPs).

The City of Seattle has adopted a set of BMPs for TESC. The Seattle Municipal Code 22.800-22.808 fully defines these BMPs, as does Department of Planning and Development (DPD) Director's Rule 16-00: [Volume 2: Construction Stormwater Control Technical Requirements Manual](#). In addition to these documents, refer to Standard Specification 1-07-15: Temporary Water Pollution and Sediment Control, with emphasis on [Sections 1-05.3\(3\), 1-07.16\(2\) and 8-01](#).

Additional resources for standard details include Standard Plans for tree protection 132, 133, and 134, as well as DPD standard plans under the [Building Permit Forms](#) section.

5.9 Creating a Safe, Accessible Work Site

The street right-of-way accommodates a variety of uses. The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) reviews Traffic Control plans (refer to [Section 5.1 Traffic Control Plans](#)) to assure that safe passage of pedestrians, bicycles and vehicles are accommodated within the street right-of-way at all times, including adjacent to sites where construction or maintenance activities are occurring. SDOT also reviews plans for tree protection. Other entities, including regulatory entities, may have additional requirements for safe and accessible work sites. The project applicant shall become familiar with working clearances and other safety requirements as applicable. Some of these issues include (but are not limited to) the following.

5.9.1 City of Seattle Standard Plans and Specifications

In general, Seattle's Standard Specifications contain baseline requirements addressing Safety Rules and Standards, Protection and Restoration of Property, Public Convenience and Safety, Notifications

Required of Contractor Activities, Temporary Traffic Control ([Standard Specifications 1-07.1\(2\), 1-07.16, 1-07.23, 1-07.28, and 1-10](#)), and other General Requirements that may apply to a specific construction. These Standard Specifications may be amended by permit, by the Seattle City Council, or other legal authority for a site or project specific application.

[Chapter 49.17 RCW](#) Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act addresses the responsibilities of the employer to ensure safe working conditions. [Title 296 WAC](#) addresses the responsibilities of the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries as it relates to safe working conditions. [Chapter 296-155 Washington Administrative Code \(WAC\)](#) addresses most, but not all, construction safety elements typical of construction in the street right-of-way.

It is the responsibility of the contractor to ensure the safety of all persons and the protection of all property.

5.9.2 King County/Metro Transit Clearances

For more information about King County/Metro Transit Clearances, refer to [Section 5.1 Traffic Control Plan](#). Additionally, [Standard Specification 1-07.28 Item 2](#) and [Standard Specification 1-07.28 Items 6 and 10](#) may also apply.

5.10 Contact Information

Organization Name/Website	Phone
Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) General Information	(206) 684-5111
SDOT Shoring Review Section	
SDOT Street Use Division	(206) 684-5283
SDOT Street Utility Coordination	(206)684-5280
SDOT Traffic Management Division	(206) 684-5111
Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) General Information	
SPU Land Survey Services	

Additional contact information and resources are located in the [City of Seattle Staff Directory](#), which is searchable by Department, Division and individual staff.

Chapter 6

Streetscape Design Guidelines

6.1 Street Design Concept Plans

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6.1.1 Overview

Streetscape features, such as street lights, trees and landscaping, and street furniture can contribute to the unique character of a block or entire neighborhood. This chapter describes the process for developing a Street Design Concept Plan (Concept Plan) and the process for getting such a plan approved by the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) and Department of Planning and Development (DPD). Refer to [Figure 6-1: Street Design Concept Plan Process](#) [ 322 kb].

Seattle has a growing number of areas where community groups, developers or property owners are interested in developing a design concept for a street or series of streets. Concept Plans solidify a vision for the street or streets included and can tie that vision back to other planning and design documents that the neighborhood or City may have developed. Concept Plans are also useful as a vehicle for discussion between the proponent and the City about appropriate streetscape elements given the adjacent land use and the street's operational characteristics. Refer to [Figure 6-2: Street Design Concept Plan Template-Plan](#) [ 4 MB] for a sample plan and to [Figure 6-3: Street Design Concept Plan Template-Context](#) [ 4 MB] for a sample plan within context..

Concept Plans are proposed by a project proponent, typically a property owner or developer seeking to do an enhanced streetscape treatment for their project. The proponent may also be a community group that is interested in enhancing or preserving certain street features that are unique to their neighborhood. The proponent will then work in consultation with SDOT and DPD to develop the Concept Plan.

Typically, the Concept Plan provisions are implemented over time by multiple property owners as parcels on the block re-develop. In order to make the submittal process as straightforward as possible for the proponent, and expedite the City review process, this chapter also includes a template for a Concept Plan submittal that can be adapted to suit the specific proposal.

6.1.2 Proposal Must Meet City Street Design Standards

Any project that is constructed in an area that has an adopted Concept Plan must still meet the currently adopted minimum requirements for the streetscape and roadway outlined in the Land Use Code, the design criteria in [Chapter 4 Design Criteria of the Right-of-Way Improvements Manual](#), and any applicable City of Seattle Standard Plans and Specifications.

6.1.3 Implementation is Voluntary

The provisions in a Concept Plan are voluntary. However, property owners are encouraged to follow

them in order to achieve their intent. Street Use Permit submittals that follow the provisions of the Concept Plan can be assured that the major design elements contained in their plans meet and exceed the requirements described in this Manual. The City strongly encourages that the Concept Plan be followed especially any proposals for curb alignment grade and utility locations.

6.1.4 Templates for Street Design Concept Plan Submittals

In order to simplify the process of preparing a Concept Plan for both the proponent and the City, the following template shall be used for submittals. Items in bold are required for all submittals:


6.1.4a Context

The context information should include the following:

- **Vision statement:** one or two paragraphs that describe the vision the proponent is trying to achieve through the Concept Plan. This should be supplemented with photos of existing conditions and illustrative sketches of the proposal.
- **Locational map:** the purpose of this map is to locate the project and define its geographic scope.
- **Existing street section:** develop a scaled (1 inch=20 feet) is suggested), dimensioned street section that defines the existing street (e.g., number, width and typical purpose of travel lanes, location and width of sidewalks and planting strips).

Refer to [Figure 6-3: Street Design Concept Plan Template-Context](#) [ 4 MB].

6.1.4b Dimensioned Street Section of Proposal

Develop a scaled (1 inch=10 feet is suggested), dimensioned street section that defines the proposed street elements. This section should be accompanied by a short description of the features that are proposed to change if the Concept Plan is approved and implemented. Refer to [Figure 6-4: Street Design Concept Plan Template: Dimensioned Street Section](#) [ 2 MB] for an example. A plan section may be necessary to present the full concept. Scale for both the existing and proposal may change depending on the geographic size of the proposal.

6.1.4c Detailed Evaluation of Traffic Operations

Describe the proposed operations of the street(s) for traffic. Include, at a minimum, the following:

- One way or two way operations;
- Presence and configuration of parking;
- Sidewalk location and width;
- Presence of signals, regulatory signs or other roadway markings;
- Presence of traffic calming devices;
- Analysis of existing capacity, volumes and level of service on arterials and impact of proposal on future traffic operations along the street and adjacent arterial system;
- Impacts on non-motorized modes of travel (pedestrian, bicycle, people with mobility impairments); and
- Evaluation of freight mobility and local service deliveries.

6.1.4d Dimensioned, Plan View Sketch of Proposal

Develop a plan view sketch of the proposed street right-of-way features. The Concept Plan should define or illustrate all of the streetscape features proposed, as well as basic information about traffic operations and typical travel behaviors on the street or streets. Include, at a minimum, the following

street right-of-way features:

Roadway

- Curblines (including curb bulbs if proposed) or roadway edge;
- Special curb space zones (e.g., loading zones, bus layover zones);
- Parking, on-street location and configuration;
- Traffic operations (as defined above);
- Transit routes (bus, light rail, monorail or streetcar);
- Service access and delivery needs; and
- Street classifications within a quarter mile of the proposed site (refer to [Section 4.2 Street Classifications and Types](#)).

Streetscape

- Sidewalks, walkways or other pedestrian space (location and dimensions);
- Bicycle parking;
- Paving material design;
- Trees and landscaping design, location and specimen type;
- Street furniture (e.g., benches, planters, waste receptacles), description and location;
- Weather protection (e.g., awnings);
- Signage, especially any non-standard or special signs;
- Public art or other unique features; and
- Transit stops or stations.

Utilities

- Lighting (roadway, pedestrian scaled or other);
- Utilities, type and location of water, power and drainage both above and below grade;
- Natural drainage proposals; and
- Private utility locations (refer to Chapter 5 Construction and Maintenance, [Section 5.3 Coordination Activities](#)).

6.1.4e Other Considerations or Unique Features Proposed

Include a description of streetscape features that are considered unique (e.g., special paving treatments or landscaping, special street and/or pedestrian lighting, non-standard stormwater or natural drainage treatments).

6.1.5 Approval Process

Concept Plans can be formally approved through a DPD/SDOT Joint Director's Rule. The Proponent develops a [Street Design Concept Plan using the guidance provided in Section 6.1.4](#).

6.1.5a Proposal of Preliminary Concept Plan

The Proponent proposes the preliminary concept to City.

6.1.5b Pre-Application Conference

Proponent attends a pre-application conference with staff from SDOT, DPD and DON (if appropriate) to describe the vision for the Concept Plan and get input as to whether the proposal is feasible. In some cases, staff from other departments may need to be involved in making the final decision as to whether the concept proposed is feasible. In these instances, a final determination of whether the applicant should develop the Concept Plan will be made in writing within 30 days of the pre-application

conference.

6.1.5c Develop Concept Plan

The Proponent develops [Street Design Concept Plan using the guidance provided in Section 6.1.4](#).

6.1.5d City Review of Concept Plan

SDOT, in consultation with DPD, reviews the Concept Plan and describes the modifications or conditions that need to be met for City approval.

6.1.5e Proponent Revises Concept Plan as Requested by City

The Proponent modifies Concept Plan and re-submits to SDOT for final review and approval. SDOT will consult with DPD before a decision is made.

6.1.5f Approval by DPD/SDOT Joint Director's Rule

SDOT and DPD approve the Concept Plan by Joint Director's Rule. The Joint Director's Rule process has requirements for completion including listing the Rule in the Daily Journal of Commerce (DJC) and providing a 14 day appeal period prior to approval. The Rule must also be approved by the DPD and SDOT Directors. Once approved, the Concept Plan is appended to this Manual and listed in [Section 6.1.8: List of Approved Street Design Concept Plans](#).

6.1.6 Summary of Approval Conditions

If a Concept Plan is approved by the City through a Joint DPD/SDOT Director's Rule, then the following applies:

- SDOT has agreed that the proposals described are appropriate for the street or streets defined.
- SDOT and DPD have determined the vision for the streetscape and features described in the Concept Plan are consistent with a recognized community or city sponsored plan for the area.
- The Concept Plan has had an appropriate level of review by SDOT and DPD and by other interested stakeholders.
- Once approved, the Concept Plan will be appended to this Manual and made available through this website. These actions will maintain a record of the proposed improvements, so that as new development proposals come forward within an area covered by a Concept Plan, the City can strongly encourage that the plan be followed.
- Improvements on streets that have an adopted Concept Plan may be implemented at one time, or over a longer period of time by multiple development or street right-of-way improvement projects.
- Preparation of a Concept Plan is encouraged for projects that are located on a designated Green Street or Neighborhood Green Street (refer to [Chapter 6.2 Green Streets](#)).
- Maintenance of any street right-of-way improvements that are beyond City standards is the responsibility of the property owners unless otherwise negotiated with SDOT. View more information about maintenance agreements related to streetscape improvements in [6.2.6f Maintenance](#).

6.1.7 Key SDOT Considerations In Review of Street Design Concept Plans

Enhancements to the streetscape such as special paving treatments and street furnishings can contribute to the experience for pedestrians and help define neighborhood character. Well-designed streetscapes can support activities in neighborhood business districts, and make walking an attractive choice for getting around the city. SDOT recognizes and supports the range of benefits a well-designed streetscape provides for all pedestrians, including people with disabilities. For these reasons, SDOT reviews streetscape design elements very carefully to ensure that all of the materials, dimensions and design elements meet safety and accessibility requirements.

In addition to the aesthetic and practical benefits of a well-designed streetscape, SDOT must meet state and national safety and access standards for streetscape design. It should be possible to carry out the creative intent of a design proposal and meet the safety and accessibility requirements. SDOT and the Department of Planning & Development (DPD) are working together to better coordinate SDOT's early involvement and guidance with the design review process. The information below describes the key issues that SDOT street use permit reviewers and engineers must consider when reviewing streetscape designs:

6.1.7a Use of Materials

Pavement materials that result in a slippery or uneven pavement surface will not comply with standards established by the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) and therefore should be avoided.

6.1.7b Minimum Sidewalk Width, Areas Free of Obstructions

ADA requires a minimum of five feet of clear sidewalk space for two wheel chair users to pass on another. SDOT prefers six feet of unobstructed, linear sidewalk space that is free of street furniture, street trees, planters, and other vertical elements. These minimum widths are required to provide access to people with mobility impairments.

6.1.7c Curbside Management

Curb space to accommodate bike lanes, parking, loading zones, transit zones, and other street elements is in very high demand in Seattle neighborhoods. While wide sidewalks and planting strips may meet many City and neighborhood goals, on-street parking spaces in business districts may also meet multiple policies and goals. Trade-offs are often necessary among the numerous uses competing for limited amounts of curb space. Removing parking to add other street elements is possible in many locations and always requires careful consideration of business and neighborhood parking needs. Transit system needs, including bus zones, must be accommodated to support quick and reliable transit service throughout the city. Get more information about [curb space uses](#). And, refer to the [City of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan priorities for curb space uses](#).

6.1.8 List of Approved Street Design Concept Plans

Title	Streets Included	Special Designation	Reference Number
The Street Element of the Ballard Municipal Center Plan	20th and 22nd Avenues NW NW Market Street NW 56 th-58 th Streets	None	SDOT DR 2002-04 DPD DR 15-2002
Terry Avenue N. Street Design Guidelines	Terry Avenue North between Denny Way and Mercer Street	None	Pending

6.2 Green Streets

[6.2.1 Background](#)

[6.2.2 Green Street Types](#)

[6.2.3 Green Street Locations](#)

[6.2.4 Basic Design Principles](#)

[6.2.5 Designating New Green Street and Neighborhood Green Streets](#)

[6.2.6 Green Street Design, Permit and Construction Process](#)

6.2.1 Background

A Green Street is a street right-of-way that, through a variety of design and operational treatments, gives priority to pedestrian circulation and open space over other transportation uses. The treatments may

include sidewalk widening, landscaping, [traffic calming](#), and other pedestrian-oriented features. The purpose of a Green Streets is to enhance and expand public open space, and to reinforce desired land use and transportation patterns on appropriate City street rights-of-way.


The original designation and mapping of Green Streets is in the City of Seattle 1985 Land Use and Transportation Plan for Downtown Seattle. Additional Green Streets were designated in the Northgate Area Comprehensive Plan (City of Seattle, 1993) and in a number of Neighborhood Plans affecting areas throughout Seattle.

Today, the Seattle Comprehensive Plan and the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) provide the policy guidance for green streets. These two plans define a number of Street Types (refer to Chapter 4 Design Criteria, [Section 4.2 Street Classifications and Street Types](#)) including Green Streets and Neighborhood Green Streets. The information in this Manual provides guidance to an applicant who wishes to develop their project along a Green Street or Neighborhood Green Street, including the planning and design process, the City approval process for Green Street and Neighborhood Green Street designs, and some information on construction and maintenance of street features. For the types of street features that are appropriate to include on both Green Street types, refer to Chapter 4 Design Criteria, [Section 4.2 Street Classifications and Street Types](#). For information on the bonus floor area for amenity features allowed in the Seattle Municipal Code, [refer to SMC 23.49.013](#).

6.2.2 Green Street Types

There are two types of Green Streets:

1. Green Streets located in Downtown Seattle and defined and mapped in the Land Use Code; and
2. Neighborhood Green Streets that are designated through neighborhood plans or other City adoption process (e.g., City Council Ordinance or Director's Rule).

The City's original Green Streets policy offered a developer bonus in exchange for construction of an approved Green Street streetscape, and the bonus was limited to Downtown Seattle, consisting of the Belltown, Denny Triangle, Urban Core, Denny Triangle, Pioneer Square, and International District neighborhoods (refer to [Figure 6-5 Green Street Locations](#) [ 1 MB]). Subsequently, the City has allowed Green Streets to be designated in Neighborhood Plans outside of Downtown Seattle, where no funding incentive exists. These are referred to as Neighborhood Green Streets. A more complete description of each the policy intent and purpose for each green street type follows:


Green Street Definition and Purpose

Definition



As defined in the [City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element](#), "Green Streets are designated on a number of non-arterial streets within Downtown Seattle. Landscaping, historic character elements, traffic calming, and other unique features distinguish Green Streets from other Street Types. Green Streets are designed to emphasize pedestrian amenities and landscaping in areas that have dense, residential land uses. Each Green Street has its own unique character and design. The street right-of-way dimensions can vary significantly from street to street and from segment to segment."

Purpose

- Enhance pedestrian circulation and create open space opportunities in medium to high density residential areas lacking adequate public open space.
- Create a vibrant pedestrian environment in the street right-of-way that attracts pedestrians.
- Strengthen connections between residential enclaves and other

	<p>Downtown amenities by improving the streetscape for pedestrians, bicycles and transit patrons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support economic activity in Downtown neighborhoods by creating an attractive and welcoming “front door” for pedestrians. • Maximize opportunities for trees and other landscaping to create a high quality open space.
Location	Designated streets in Downtown Seattle (refer to Figure 6-5 Green Street Locations [ 1 MB]).
Typical Adjacent Land Use	Residential or mixed use.
Street Classification	Non-arterial.
Authority	Designated by City Council Ordinance and adopted and mapped in the Land Use Code (SMC 23.49).
Implementation	The design and construction of Green Street improvements is funded by developers in exchange for increased floor-area-ratio (FAR) or other land use code departures, as specified in Seattle's Land Use Code (SMC 23.49.013) .

Neighborhood Green Streets


Definition	As defined in the City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element , Neighborhood Green Streets may be on any non-arterial street outside of Downtown Seattle. Similar to Green Streets, Neighborhood Green Streets emphasize pedestrian amenities, landscaping, historic character elements, traffic calming, and other unique features. Neighborhood Green Streets were designated in Seattle’s neighborhood plans.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect a local community’s desire to target specific streetscapes for a pedestrian or open space enhancement. • Enhance the pedestrian environment and attract pedestrians. • Create open space opportunities in residential neighborhoods. • Retain unique street features (e.g., brick paving, mature landscaping that is adjacent to the roadway, curbless streets).
Location	Designated streets in neighborhoods outside of Downtown Seattle (refer to Figure 6-6: Neighborhood Green Street Locations in North Seattle [ 521 kb] and Figure 6-7: Neighborhood Green Street Locations in South Seattle [ 521 kb]).
Typical Adjacent Land Use	Residential or mixed use that includes residential uses.
Street Classification	Non-arterial.
Authority	Various. Neighborhood Green Streets are typically recommended in Neighborhood Plans or other transportation plans, and may subsequently be adopted into the Land Use Code through City Council Ordinance, designated by joint DPD/SDOT Director’s Rule, or included in a city recognized subarea



transportation plan.

Implementation

Neighborhood Green Streets do not have a dedicated funding mechanism in most cases. Funding to design and build Neighborhood Green Streets may come from a Local Improvement District, [Neighborhood Matching Funds](#), partnerships with other agencies (e.g., transit agencies), through private development or as part of a Seattle Public Utilities [Natural Drainage Systems Project](#).

6.2.3 Green Street Locations

There are 17 adopted Green Streets in Downtown Seattle (refer to [Figure 6-5: Green Street Locations](#) [ 1 MB]). With the exception of Harbor Steps (University St. between 1st Ave. and Western Avenue) all of the Green Streets allow motorized vehicular traffic.

There are 15 adopted Neighborhood Green Streets (refer to [Figure 6-6: Neighborhood Green Street Locations in North Seattle](#) [ 521 kb] and [Figure 6-7: Neighborhood Green Street Locations in South Seattle](#) [ 521 kb]). Another 41 Neighborhood Green Streets have been recommended in neighborhood plans in various neighborhoods, but have not yet been formally adopted and are indicated as either “neighborhood plan recommended” or “tentative” in the figures.

- **Neighborhood plan recommended:** defined in one of Seattle’s 37 adopted neighborhood plans as a Green Street improvement.
- **Tentative:** described in an [adopted neighborhood plan](#) as a street that should have some kind of pedestrian or open space improvement, but were not formally called Green Streets.

6.2.4 Basic Design Principles

The following design principles apply to both Green Streets and Neighborhood Green Streets:

- **Emphasize pedestrians and open space over other street functions.** Green Streets serve both as pedestrian gathering places, and as pedestrian corridors connecting activity areas. They are designed to provide an inviting, attractive, and safe streetscape for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit patrons. In certain cases, green streets may be designed to reduce vehicular travel speeds to the point where it becomes reasonable for pedestrians and vehicles to “share” space in the street right-of-way. In Seattle, a well-known example of this type of “shared street” is Pike Place.
- **Design should complement and enhance adjacent land uses.** Buildings in much of Downtown Seattle are required to have pedestrian friendly features at the ground floor (e.g., transparency, weather protection, prominent entrances). Green street design should complement these features with improvements in the street right-of-way that encourage pedestrian activity.
- **Keep traffic speeds and volumes low.** Green streets are designated on non-arterial streets and are expected to have lower traffic volumes and speeds than other streets in the City. One of the key factors to making a street safe and inviting for pedestrian is maintaining slow vehicle speeds and relatively low vehicle volumes. This is why green streets are designated on non-arterial streets that do not, or are not anticipated to, contribute significantly to vehicle capacity in the area. Often, green streets are designated on non-through streets or streets that are not a key part of the street grid (e.g., dead ends and short segments of street created by the collision of street grids) Design features that tend to reduce vehicular travel speeds are good choices for green street designs ([Chapter 4 Design Criteria, Section 4.2 Street Classifications and Street Types](#)). If a Green Street or Neighborhood Green Street was designated on an arterial street, traffic speeds and volumes would need to support arterial operations and the mobility needs of all users and pedestrian “priority” would not be appropriate.

- **Respond to site specific conditions.** Generally, Green Streets are conceived around a unified design concept--one that reflects or embellishes the unique character of the site. Ideally, such a design concept would be applied to every block of the Green Street. Green streets offer the opportunity to reinforce unique conditions or respond to site specific opportunities (e.g., solar access, historic buildings or street features, topography, stormwater mitigation, views).

6.2.5 Designating New Green Street and Neighborhood Green Streets

It is possible to designate new locations for Green Streets and Neighborhood Green Streets. A proposal for a new designation can be made by private development proponents, community organizations. A designation request may come through SDOT, DPD, or the [Department of Neighborhoods \(DON\)](#).

The City will assess the eligibility of the proposed Green Street or Neighborhood Green Street based on the criteria defined below in Section 6.2.5a Criteria for Designating New Green Streets and 6.2.5b Criteria for Designating New Neighborhood Green Streets.

6.2.5a Criteria for Designating New Green Streets

Designating a Green Street is a land use action that must be approved by the City through an Ordinance process. The Land Use Code (SMC reference) defines criteria for each type of land use and zoning designation to ensure that any change to land use or zoning is made according to a set of consistent criteria. The locational criteria for Green Streets are as follows:

1. Streets in medium and high-density areas where residents generally do not have access to private yards, existing open space is very limited, and land is not available for future open space development.
2. Streets within or providing connections to pedestrian-oriented neighborhood commercial areas where Green Street improvements could reinforce commercial and mixed use activity, and enhance the quality of the pedestrian environment without conflicting with the desired traffic circulation.
3. Streets at critical locations in redeveloping areas that could serve as a focus for new development and provide direction for desirable changes in land use patterns. Examples might include streets that, as Green Streets, could strengthen the residential character of areas where efforts are being made to promote residential development or stabilize an existing neighborhood.
4. Streets and street ends which provide safe pedestrian and bicycle connections with neighborhood attractions, such as schools, shopping areas, public facilities, institutions and public open spaces, or streets integrated with the City's urban trail network.
5. Streets that have a special character that is of interest to pedestrians, including streets providing shoreline access, streets with special views, and streets located in areas of unique historic or architectural interest.
6. Undeveloped streets within designated open spaces where it is desirable to retain the undeveloped conditions of the surroundings.


6.2.5b Criteria for Designating New Neighborhood Green Streets

There are no official criteria for neighborhood green streets in the Seattle Municipal Code. This chapter identifies the following as appropriate criteria for Neighborhood Green Streets.

1. Neighborhood Green Streets shall support multiple functions in the street right-of-way, especially pedestrian access and landscaping. Streets that are good candidates for traffic calming are also appropriate as streets with slower traffic enhance conditions for pedestrians and support the Neighborhood Green Street concept.
2. Streets that are direct links to major transit facilities and light rail stations.

3. Streets and street ends which provide safe pedestrian and bicycle connections with neighborhood attractions, such as schools, shopping areas, public facilities, institutions and public open spaces, or streets integrated with the City's Urban Trails Network.
4. Streets that have a special character that is of interest to pedestrians, including streets providing shoreline access, streets with special views, and streets located in areas of unique historic or architectural interest.
5. Undeveloped streets or streets that are not fully improved (e.g., sidewalk, curb and gutter) where it is desirable to retain the undeveloped conditions of the surroundings. In some cases, property access on undeveloped streets may necessitate that a minimum level of improvements be completed, but not required at the full standard.

6.2.6 Green Street Design, Permit and Construction Process

Design and permit activities on designated Green Streets and Neighborhood Green Streets shall follow the following process, defined below and charted in [Figure 6-8: Green Street Design, Permit and Construction Process](#) [ 377 kb].

6.2.6a Initial Contact

The proponent (developer or community group representative) can start the Green Street design, permit and construction process by contacting either the [Seattle Department of Transportation \(SDOT\)](#) or [Department of Planning and Development Department \(DPD\)](#).

6.2.6b Prepare a Street Design Concept Plan

To assist in approval of a Green Street or Neighborhood Green Street it is necessary to prepare a Concept Plan according to the guidelines and templates in [Section 6.1 Street Design Concept Plans](#). For Downtown Green Street projects seeking an increase in FAR (Floor Area Ratio) provide FAR calculations per [Seattle Municipal Code Section 23.49.013](#).

At this point, the project proponent can decide to have the Concept Plan adopted by Joint DPD/SDOT Director's Rule or prepare the Concept Plan at a level of detail suitable for Street Improvement Permit Review. Refer to [Chapter 2.4.1 Street Improvement Permits](#).

6.2.6c Existing Street Design Concept Plan Review

If an approved Concept Plan exists for the Green Street or Neighborhood Green Street, it is the responsibility of the applicant to determine if the design concept is still viable given conditions in the area or the design standards that may have changed since the approval of the original Concept Plan.

6.2.6d Permit Review and Issuance

After incorporating comments from the City review for the Concept Plan, the Green Street proponent refines the Concept Plan to an adequate level of design to commence a [Master Use Permit \(MUP\)](#) and/or [Building Construction Permit](#) process, or if the proposal impacts the street right-of-way and not private property, the proponent will want to initiate a Street Improvement Permit process. For information about how to prepare a Street Improvement Permit, including early design guidance, plan requirements, and City of Seattle CAD standards, refer to [Section 2.4.1 Street Improvement Permits](#), in particular SDOT [Client Assistance Memo \(CAM\) #461](#) and SDOT [CAM #462](#).

6.2.6e Green Street and Neighborhood Green Street Construction

Construction of the Green Street that is part of a MUP or Building Construction Permit can commence once the DPD and SDOT reviews for the Street Improvement Permit and the MUP or Construction Permit are issued. The project is concluded by a final inspection and, where relevant, issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.

For Neighborhood Green Street projects that are not part of a MUP or Construction Permit, construction can commence when the Street Improvement Permit is issued. The process is concluded with the

approval of a final inspection of the work completed.

6.2.6f Maintenance

Sidewalks with special paving treatments (such as pavers or stamped, colored concrete) add a unique design element to the streetscape and can enhance the walking experience for pedestrians. It is important to design special paving so that it retains its integrity over time. This is becoming increasingly important as the number of utility cuts on sidewalks increases to respond to the demands of higher density development. Carefully selected colors can be mismatched as the original color fades and new sections are applied. A successful design solution will address safety, access, and aesthetics.

To assure that maintenance is considered when streetscape design features are being selected, SDOT requires a maintenance agreement for all streetscape treatments that go beyond City Standards. The following sections provide an overview of what is expected of the property owner and SDOT regarding maintenance of streetscape features:

Responsibility: With their consent, the abutting property owners shall be responsible for the maintenance of the completed Green Street section unless there is an agreement in writing, acceptable to SDOT, which provides for an alternative maintenance and repair program. Said agreement shall be a written condition on any street use permit for a Green Street project.

Joint agreements: Proponents may enter into an agreement with other property owners adjacent to their Green Street section for shared maintenance responsibility.

Maintenance, repair and replacement: Maintenance responsibilities for Green Streets shall include on-going sweeping, debris removal, landscape maintenance, and responsibility for the repair and replacement of all auxiliary street design elements of the Green Street (i.e. fixture replacement, replacing tree grates, paver repair, replacement or repair of special amenities such as fountains, benches, and planters).

6.3 Station Area Plans

6.3.1 Overview

Station area planning (SAP) defined a vision and framework for future development around transit stations for Link Light Rail and the Seattle Monorail Project. The City of Seattle, in partnership with transit agencies and with significant input from the community completed station area planning for light rail stations on the initial segment of Link Light Rail and for the 19 proposed monorail stations of the Green Line. In general, station area planning efforts have focused on the areas within a quarter mile of the proposed transit station. The plans identify key public and private investments as well as City actions to achieve City and Community goals in the station areas.

Station area plans have significant input and review by the communities in or adjacent to the station area and may provide useful context for future development plans and projects in the areas they address.

6.3.2 Light Rail Station Area Plans

The [Link Light Rail Station Area Planning](#) web pages on the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) website provides a comprehensive record of accomplishments resulting from the Station Area Planning Program, a three-year effort led by the City of Seattle Strategic Planning Office in partnership with Sound Transit. With support from Sound Transit, Station Area Planning engaged city departments, community representatives and partner agencies in planning and development work for the ¼ mile around proposed light rail stations.

The Station Area Planning Program refined the community's vision initially articulated in neighborhood plans, for each station area and has already begun to implement some of the actions necessary to make these visions a reality. Station area plans were completed for thirteen neighborhoods: Rainier Beach/S. Henderson St. Station, Othello/New Holly Station, Columbia City/S. Edmunds St. Station, Mt. Baker/S. McClellan St., Beacon Hill Station, International District/Chinatown Station, Pioneer Square Station, Westlake/Convention Place Station, and the First Hill, Capitol Hill, University District Station areas. Each plan includes a vision for the station area, an urban design concept plan and a number of strategies and actions recommended to accomplish the vision. Refer to the [SDOT website](#).

6.3.3 Monorail Station Area Plans

Station Area Planning for the Green Line monorail system is a complementary effort to the station and guideway design work undertaken by the Seattle Monorail Project (SMP). Monorail Station Area Planning will identify the opportunities and implications presented by the arrival of the Green Line including suggested actions to best integrate the station and transportation system into the surrounding built environment and future use patterns of community members. The dynamic relationships between transportation, land use, economics, and urban form within station areas will be examined through Station Area Planning. Get more information about Monorail station area planning on the City of Seattle [Integrating the Monorail](#) web pages.

6.4 Natural Drainage Systems

[6.4.1 Chapter Purpose](#)

[6.4.2 Definition of Natural Drainage Systems](#)

[6.4.3 Benefits of Natural Drainage Systems in Creek Watersheds](#)

[6.4.4 Where Natural Drainage Systems Work Best](#)

[6.4.5 Design Guidance](#)

[6.4.6 Approval and Permit Procedures](#)

[6.4.7 Maintenance Responsibilities](#)

6.4.1 Chapter Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidance to applicants that are interested in considering Natural Drainage System (NDS) designs as part of their development project. NDS designs can improve community livability and creek health and be accomplished consistent with public safety, utility functions, transportation uses and other environmental priorities for Seattle's street rights-of-way.

6.4.2 Definition of Natural Drainage Systems

NDS design is an alternative approach to a typical curb and gutter street improvement with underground drainage and detention systems. An NDS uses swales, landscaping and permeable pavements to accomplish the following:

- reduce the amount of impermeable surface in the street right-of-way;
- filter pollutants from surface water through soil and plants; and,
- slows the flow of water to improve habitat for fish and other wildlife in Seattle's urban creeks.

6.4.3 Benefits of Natural Drainage Systems in Creek Watersheds

When you live in a creek watershed, the rain that falls in your neighborhood flows through pipes and ditches to the creek as stormwater. In Seattle, creeks are fragile ecosystems, home to salmon and other wildlife. At one time stormwater infiltrated the soils of meadows and wetlands, and collected on the surface of trees and vegetation. It was released slowly throughout the year to streams, lakes and estuaries.

With urban growth the trees and vegetation have been replaced with impermeable or disturbed surfaces



such as rooftops, roadways, and construction sites. Consequently stormwater flows across these surfaces collecting pollutants generated by our urban activities, such as landscaping, transportation, and business. Instead of reaching creeks slowly, the water flows quickly and in great volumes to Seattle's creeks. This causes erosion of stream banks, increased flooding, and degradation of water quality and aquatic habitat.

Seattle has implemented a pilot NDS Program as one tool to mitigate these impacts. The program includes City-funded capital projects that retrofit residential streets in creek watersheds to improve stormwater management and provide other neighborhood amenities such as landscaping. Get more information on the City's [Natural Drainage System Capital Program](#).

Based on the success of these capital projects, Seattle Department of Transportation and Seattle Public Utilities have compiled the design guidance in this chapter to assist developers with projects in creek watersheds that want to include NDS techniques as part of their projects.

6.4.4 Where Natural Drainage Systems Work Best

Residential access streets in creek watersheds: The primary function of residential access streets is to provide access to neighborhood land uses and connections to higher level traffic streets, such as arterials. Residential access streets typically have lower traffic volumes, lower speeds and lower volumes of trucks and buses than arterial streets.

Locations with existing informal drainage: [Seattle's creek watersheds](#) [ 500 kb] are largely served by informal drainage (e.g., ditch and culvert systems, or no formal system at all) and NDS improvements provide an opportunity to enhance the existing informal system. Refer to [Figure 6-9: City of Seattle Creek Basin](#) [ 500 kb].

Areas with existing ditches The Natural Drainage System (NDS) guidance in this chapter may be used to implement street improvements in locations that have a ditch and culvert system. Since the City does not permit the filling of a ditch if that ditch functions as part of the City's informal drainage system in the street right-of-way and is located within a creek watershed, NDS options are encouraged as an alternative to ditch filling. Exceptions to the ditch filling moratorium policy include culvert installations that are necessary to implement driveway permits, required street improvements, City-approved street improvements, or City capital improvements.

The SDOT Director may approve a requested exception per the Street Use Code (15.04.112) if the Director determines that the modification is likely to be equally protective of public health, safety and welfare, the environment, or public and private property. If the proposed modification is not equally protective, the Director may approve a requested exception if substantial reasons are documented such as:

- an emergency situation necessitates approval of the exception;
- a reasonable use of the adjacent property is not possible unless the exception is approved; or
- harm or threat of harm to public health, safety and welfare, the environment, or public and private property is at risk unless the exception is approved.

6.4.5 Design Guidance

The design guidance in this chapter typically applies to street improvements using Natural Drainage System (NDS) elements, and may need to be modified to address local conditions.

The design guidance presented below should be considered once the applicant and the City have jointly determined that a NDS approach is appropriate for the project. Keep in mind that NDS projects need to

be designed in a manner which ensures protection of the public's safety and addresses the mobility needs of the traveling public. If an NDS approach is being considered, the applicant is encouraged to participate in an [early design guidance meeting](#) with City staff to discuss possible site constraints, transportation needs, soil conditions, design and accessibility issues, and maintenance responsibilities.

Note: minimum requirements defined in the [Land Use Code](#), the design criteria in [Chapter 4 Design Criteria](#) of this Manual, and any applicable [City of Seattle Standard Plans and Specifications](#) apply to NDS improvements in the street right-of-way. Deviations from the design criteria presented in this Manual may be allowed in some cases, where minimum requirements can not be achieved due to site constraints.

6.4.5a Principles


There are a few guiding principles to consider when designing a Natural Drainage System (NDS) project in the street right-of-way:

Minimize impermeable surfaces Avoid paving or compacting soils where it is not necessary. This could mean a narrower driveway, a smaller parking area, or use of alternative materials which reintroduce water back into the soil.

Gentle slopes to slow the flow: When stormwater moves slowly through a system more pollutants are filtered and more water infiltrates or evaporates. A pipe is designed to move water at top velocities. Re-grading a ditch with gentler side slopes and a moderately sloping, broad channel allows water to percolate into the soil. Channel bottoms can be made gentler by adding “steps.”

Amend soil and add vegetation to reduce stormwater quantity:

- **Amend soils** Adding organic compost or mulch to soil improves its ability to support plants and absorb stormwater. Healthy soil is the backbone of natural drainage systems. Refer to [Standard Specification 7-21](#) for more information.
- **Add vegetation:** Trees and vegetation catch rainfall before it reaches the ground reducing the amount of stormwater runoff. Native shrubs, perennials and small trees planted in natural drainage systems slow the movement of stormwater, encourage infiltration and provide bio-remediation of pollutants.

NDS may be accomplished as a street improvement or in conjunction with a construction permit. Not all NDS options are appropriate for all project types. [Figure 6-10: Natural Drainage System Menu of Options](#) [ 535 kb] identifies appropriate NDS options based on the permit type.

6.4.5b Natural Drainage System Options

1. Swales

Swales replace traditional planting strips with linear rain gardens. Swales can vary in depth from six inches to 24 inches and can be planted with grass, perennials, shrubs and small trees. Consider the following guidance for swale design:

Swale Design Category	Design Guidance
Swale Grade	Side slopes: 3 horizontal minimum to 1 vertical on the roadside of the swale. Variance of up to 2 horizontal to 1 vertical slope on non-street side may be approved by the City Traffic Engineer.
Depth	Where no ditch currently exists, swale depth should be 6 inches minimum. Swale

	depth should not exceed 3.9 feet maximum below the roadway.
Longitudinal Slope	Grade elevation through the length of the swale should be gradual and match adjacent elevations.
Top Width	7-12 feet depending on site conditions.
Bottom Width	2 foot minimum (1 foot may be approved by City Traffic Engineer in consultation with SPU).
Shoulder Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade shoulder adjacent to roadway with 2% slope toward swale. • Shoulder should withstand vehicular traffic loads. • Grade a 2-foot shoulder on the private property side of the swale with 2% slope toward the swale. • Railing or fences may be necessary to protect the public safety adjacent to swale embankments.
Clearances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be at least 30 inches over top of water service and gas line. • Grade a 3 foot flat area around all power poles or fire hydrants. • If filling around a power pole more than 10 inches, notify City Light for wood surface treatment.
Soil Amendments and Depth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amend existing substrate by incorporating 3 inches of compost or decomposed mulch to a depth of 6-8 inches. • If longitudinal slope is greater than 6% or existing ditch is lined with asphalt, provide appropriate soil erosion protection such as a 3 inch depth of 1-3 inch clean rock.
Plantings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plantings of a variety growing taller than 30 inches should be placed at least 10 feet from the pavement edge and 1 foot from sidewalk corridor. • Long term maintenance of plantings needs to be considered.

2. Soils and Planting

The success of a natural drainage system has much to do with building healthy soils that can readily absorb surface water, and selecting appropriate plants. Consider the following guidance for soil and plant selection:

Planting Component	Design Guidance
Materials	Plantings should consist of primarily native shrubs, perennials, and groundcovers that can thrive in wet and dry soil moistures. Refer to an NDS planting list for more information.
Sight distances	Locations for materials larger than 30 feet in height at maturity should be placed at least 10 feet from the pavement edge and 1 foot from the sidewalk corridor and not block sight distance of driveways, alleys and streets.
Sizing	Trees and other plant materials shall be sized for compatibility with sloped planting conditions and may be smaller than typical street design standards.
Soil amendments	Amend existing substrate by incorporating 3 inches of compost or decomposed mulch to a depth of 6-8 inches.


3. Sidewalks

If sidewalks are required for your development permit, consider using alternative materials such as permeable pavement or unit pavers.

Sidewalk Component	Design Guidance
Width	5 feet in width, or sized to accommodate typical use (e.g., sidewalk may need to be wider near a school or transit stop).
Setbacks	Ensure 1-2 feet of unpaved flat shoulder between sidewalk and swale slope. Depending on the slope, railings may be needed.
Materials	Get more information on permeable pavement types. Get more information on maintenance of permeable pavements.

4. Driveways

The location and design of driveways has a significant influence on the success of an NDS. Consider the following design guidance for driveways located within the street right-of-way when a NDS is being used:

Driveway Component	Design Guidance
Width	12 feet within the street right-of-way. Narrower driveway openings may be considered based on site conditions.
Shoulder	Provide 2 foot compacted load bearing shoulder on both sides of new driveway before the swale or berm starts.
Slope	Driveway profile slope within the street ROW shall comply with Standard Plans 430 and 431 .
Materials	Minimize driveway pavement through the use of Hollywood drives (paving wheel tracks only) and permeable surfaces (such as structural grass, permeable asphalt, permeable concrete, unit-pavers, or gravel pave behind the sidewalk area. Refer to Figure 6-11: Permeable Pavement Comparison Guide [ 5 MB] for more information.

5. Parking

The location and design of on-street parking has a significant influence on the success of a natural drainage system. Consider the following design guidance on parking space size, location and materials:

Parking Space Component	Design Guidance
Size	No larger than 8 x 20 feet within the street right-of-way.
Shoulder	Provide 1 foot compacted shoulder between parking pad and swale.
Materials	Minimize pavement through the use of Hollywood drives (paving wheel tracks only) behind the sidewalk only, and permeable surfaces (such as structural grass, permeable asphalt, permeable concrete, unit-pavers, or gravel pave. Refer to Figure 6-11:

[Permeable Pavement Comparison Guide](#) [ 5 MB] for more information.

6. Roadway

The design of the adjacent roadway must meet minimum [City of Seattle design criteria](#). Consider the following design guidance for altering or adding roadways in creek watersheds:

Roadway Component	Design Guidance
Shoulder	Minimum 2-foot road shoulder on each side of the road, with 2% maximum slope toward swales. Acceptable road shoulder materials should comply with Standard Specification 2-06: Subgrade Preparation and 4-04: Ballasting and Crushed Surfacing .
Cross slope	Cross slope range is between 2% and 4%. The roadway may drain to one side toward the curb and/or swale as long as no concentrated curb discharges occur. Where repaving or adding part of the roadway width, the cross slope should be a continuation of the existing slope or be sloped to drain the surface runoff from the pavement. The roadway cross slope shall not be greater than 4%.
Minimum roadway profile	Minimum roadway profile is 1%.
Minimum roadway width	<p>The minimum roadway width is 20 feet with the following conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pedestrian shoulder is adjacent to the roadway with on- street parking on one side of the street.• Sidewalk (if it exists) is separated from the roadway with parking on one side of the street.• Survey information including traffic volume, traffic speed and parking utilization may be required for review.• Depending on local conditions, SDOT may increase the required pavement width or remove parking.

7. Permeable Paving

Permeable pavements are surfaces that allow water to pass through voids in the paving material and/or between paving units while providing a stable, load-bearing surface. Permeable pavements reduce impermeable surfaces and can be used to achieve City of Seattle water quality requirements and credit toward flow control requirements.

An important component to permeable pavements is the reservoir base course, which provides stability for load-bearing surfaces and underground storage for runoff. There are three main categories of permeable pavements that meet Seattle 's permeable pavement standards:

Permeable concrete or permeable asphalt pavement: Is similar to standard pavement, but the fine material (sand and finer) is reduced or eliminated in the mix. As a result, channels form between the aggregate in the pavement surface and allow water to infiltrate.

Plastic grid systems Come in rolls that are covered with soil and grass or gravel. The grid sections interlock and are pinned in place.

Interlocking pavers: Include cast-in-place or modular pre-cast blocks. The cast-in-place systems are reinforced concrete made with reusable forms. Pre-cast systems are either high-strength Portland cement concrete or plastic blocks. Both systems have wide joints or openings that can be filled with soil and grass or gravel.

Refer to [Figure 6-11: Permeable Pavement Comparison Guide](#) [ 5 MB] for more information on these materials.


Permeable pavements—use within the street right-of-way

At this time, permeable pavements are limited to non-street surfaces, such as sidewalks, driveways and parking pads. The following table outlines which materials are allowed for each street right-of-way component.

Component	Design Guidance—Approved Materials
Driveway, parking pad	Parking spaces and driveways may use the gravel-pave technique, permeable concrete or permeable asphalt provided the City’s loading requirements for driveways and long term maintenance considerations are met. Refer to Standard Plan 430 and Standard Plan 431 for more information.
Sidewalk	Permeable asphalt and permeable concrete may be used for sidewalks provided the City’s ADA requirements and long term maintenance considerations are met.
Pathway	Permeable asphalt, permeable concrete, unit pavers and gravel-pave may be used for informal pathways.
Roadway	Roadway pavement shall continue to use standard non-permeable materials.

Permeable pavements—pathways only

Component	Design Guidance
Setbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permeable pavements should not be placed within 300 feet of any steep slope. A minimum 5-foot setback shall be maintained between any part of an infiltration device and any structure or property line.
Subbase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permeable pavements shall be placed over a base material that is partially or completely below surrounding grade. Sub-base depth should be adequate to avoid a freeze-thaw impact.
Limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not use at “high-use” sites, auto commercial services (gas stations, mini-marts, commercial fueling stations, auto body and auto repair shops, auto wash), commercial truck parking areas, areas with heavy industrial activity (as defined by US Environmental Protection Agency regulations), or areas with high pesticide use. Do not use where seasonal high groundwater is at or near ground surface. Do not use in areas subject to heavy, routine sanding for traction during snow and ice accumulation. Do not use on slopes exceeding 10%. No run-off from adjacent surfaces is preferred. If run-off comes from minor or incidental permeable areas, those areas must be fully stabilized. Sediment from adjacent areas onto the permeable surface must be minimized. For projects that trigger City of Seattle Stormwater Code, supplemental design

- requirements identified in the [Flow Control Manual](#) shall be followed.
- As with other paving surfaces, longevity varies by material. Refer to the [Figure 6-11: Permeable Pavement Comparison Guide](#) [ 5 MB] for more detail.
- Additional limitations are outlined in [City of Seattle Standard Specifications](#).

6.4.6 Approval and Permit Procedures

If you are interested in using NDS guidance for street improvements, the following steps may be required in addition to the [standard permit applications process](#):

- Apply for a permit at the [SDOT Street Use Counter](#).
- Site plan drawn to scale (1 inch=20 feet scale suggested) that must include the area in the street right-of-way between parcel boundaries and 3 feet beyond, and from the street right-of-way boundary to the centerline of the road.
- Site plan must show the following features:
 - Existing structures in the street right-of-way such as culvert invert elevations, edges of any pavement including roads and driveways, and locations of manholes, fire hydrants, light poles, water main and meters, significant trees, etc.
 - Locations of new plant material, rocks, hardscaping, or other materials.
 - Indicate flow direction in the swale.
 - Cross-section drawn to scale (1 inch=5 feet or 1 inch=10 feet scale suggested) that shows maximum side slopes and maximum swale depth (as measured from the edge of the road).
- SPU, SDOT Traffic Operations and Street Use sections will review the application, and conduct a site visit if necessary prior to approving the plan.
- If approved, the applicant must pay the permit fee and pick up the completed permit at the Street Use counter.
- Following the completion of construction, a final site inspection will be conducted by a City of Seattle inspector.

6.4.7 Maintenance Responsibilities

As with other types of street improvements, adjacent property owners are responsible for maintaining sidewalks, driveways and parking pads as well as landscaping in the street right-of-way. The following sections provide general maintenance guidelines specific to natural drainage landscaping and permeable pavements.

6.4.7a Soil and Plantings

Establishment of plantings takes approximately 3 years.

Year 1: Plants are working very hard below the ground to develop new roots. Appropriate soil moisture will make the difference between success and failure during the first year. Plants need watering, a minimum of once per week for shady areas and twice per week for sunny areas, throughout the first summer. Pruning should be limited to the removal of damaged limbs, since plants and trees need maximum foliage to generate energy to develop new roots.

Year 2: Plants will begin to put on new growth and continue to develop root systems. Soil moisture is less critical than during the first year, so watering can be done less frequently. Weeding will be necessary. Pruning is still discouraged, except to remove damaged or dead limbs.

Year 3: Successfully established plantings will flourish in the third year. Expect larger shrubs to require some pruning for clearance along the sidewalk. Pruning should be limited to encourage the natural growth habit of the plant.

Natural lawn and garden care only: Pesticide use is not allowed in the City's drainage system including natural drainage systems. Refer to the [City's Natural Lawn and Garden Care website](#) for tips regarding smart water and pesticide use.

Plant replacement during establishment: Adequate plant coverage is necessary to guard against soil erosion. Ideally the original planting will include a wide selection of species spaced to provide more than adequate coverage. If there is adequate coverage of the swale soils, not all plants that fail to thrive will need to be replaced. If patches of bare soil emerge, plantings should be replaced. If groups of plants are lost, a different species may need to be considered.

Maintenance of the mulch layer: is important for both moisture retention and weed control. Spring and Fall are excellent times to mulch and prune trees and shrubs where needed.

Trimming, thinning and pruning: Once plants are established and thriving, periodic trimming, thinning and pruning of plantings and trees may be necessary to ensure that the swale edge is not completely obscured. This is particularly important on narrow rights-of-way so that pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers are aware of the change in elevation between the roadway and the swale.

6.4.7b. Maintenance for All Permeable Pavements

Permeable pavements and pavers require some additional maintenance to keep them functioning properly:

Inspect for surface material that may clog the pavement: Inspect the project upon completion to remove any fine material that has accumulated on the surface. Conduct periodic visual inspections to determine if surfaces are clogged with vegetation or fine soils. Clogged surfaces should be corrected immediately.

Periodic vacuum sweeping or pressure washing: Permeable concrete and permeable asphalt surfaces should be swept with a high-efficiency or vacuum sweeper twice per year, preferably, once in the autumn after leaf fall, and again in early spring. High pressure hosing could substitute for sweeping or supplement sweeping if material appears clogged. For gravel pave or unit pavers, replace gravel if clogging occurs.

Surface sealing is NOT allowed: Permeable paving or pavers will no longer function if the surface is sealed with a sealant application or other uncontrolled use.

Utility cut repair: Utility cuts should be backfilled with the same aggregate base used under the permeable paving to allow continued conveyance of stormwater through the base, and to prevent migration of fines from the standard base aggregate to the more open graded permeable base material. Small utility cuts can be repaired with conventional asphalt or concrete if small batches of permeable material are not available or are too expensive. Replace broken pavers or grid segments where three or more adjacent rings are broken or damaged.

Replenish aggregate: Replenish paver aggregate material in surface as needed.

Maintain public safety: With NDS systems that have highly technical designs, it is critical to identify responsibility for utility providers, SPU and property owners on how the pavement or area will be maintained and re-established to maintain public safety.

These maintenance responsibilities are critical to the successful functioning of an NDS and will be included as a project permit condition.

6.5 Traffic Calming

[6.5.1 Overview](#)

[6.5.2 Policy Guidance for SDOT's Neighborhood Traffic Control Program \(NTCP\)](#)

[6.5.3 Neighborhood Traffic Control Program Goals](#)

[6.5.4 Considerations for Traffic Calming on All Streets](#)

[6.5.5 Additional Considerations for Traffic Calming on Arterial Streets](#)

[6.5.6 Typical Traffic Calming Devices in Seattle](#)

[6.5.7 Process for Installing Traffic Calming](#)

[6.5.8 Point Criteria for Traffic Calming Project Ranking](#)

[6.5.9 Trials and Temporary Installations for Traffic Calming](#)

[6.5.10 Landscaping for Traffic Calming Devices](#)

6.5.1 Overview

Traffic calming is a way to design streets to improve safety, reduce the amount of cut-through traffic traveling on residential streets, and generally encourage people to drive more slowly. Along with education and enforcement, traffic calming has been used in many Seattle neighborhoods to slow speeds on residential streets and improve neighborhood livability by reducing cut-through traffic and improving the environment for pedestrians.

Traffic calming relies on physical and visual cues in, and adjacent to, the roadway to induce drivers to travel at slower speeds. Traffic calming is self-enforcing. The design of the roadway results in the desired effect, without relying on compliance with traffic control devices such as signals, signs, and without enforcement. Street trees and lighting complement traffic calming devices and are often used to provide the visual cues that encourage people to drive more slowly.

Traffic calming is such a powerful tool because it is effective. Some of the effects of traffic calming, such as fewer and less severe crashes, are clearly measurable. Others, such as supporting community livability, are less tangible, but equally important. Experience throughout Europe, Australia, and North America has shown that traffic calming, if done correctly, reduces traffic speeds, the number and severity of crashes, and noise level. Research on traffic-calming projects in the United States supports their effectiveness at decreasing automobile speeds, reducing the numbers of crashes, and reducing noise levels in certain locations.

This section defines the Seattle Department of Transportation's (SDOT) traffic calming policy, including appropriate tools for use on residential and arterial streets. Also included is a description of the steps that community members must take to get SDOT to evaluate traffic calming requests and prioritize them for design and construction.

6.5.2 Policy Guidance for SDOT's Neighborhood Traffic Control Program (NTCP)

Seattle's [Neighborhood Traffic Control Program \(NTCP\)](#) was established in 1978 as part of the City's annual Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Since then, Seattle's residents, in partnership with the City, have been involved in the installation of over 800 traffic circles and other traffic calming devices on

neighborhood streets. View the 2004 map of new traffic circle locations. This map is updated annually.

The purpose of the NTCP has been to reduce accidents and speeds on residential streets, thereby creating safer, more pleasant neighborhoods. Traffic circles are the most common tool used and can be seen in most residential neighborhoods throughout the City. SDOT's NTCP is guided by specific goals and policies in the [City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan \(2004\)](#) and the [Transportation Strategic Plan \(2005\)](#) as follows:

Comp. Plan Goal TG2	Manage the street system safely and efficiently for all modes and users and seek to balance limited street capacity among competing uses.
Comp. Plan Goal TG7	Protect neighborhood streets from through traffic.
Comp. Plan Policy T17	Use neighborhood traffic control devices and strategies to protect local streets from through traffic, high volumes, high speeds, and pedestrian/vehicle conflicts. Use these devices and strategies on collector arterials where they are compatible with the basic function of collector arterials.
TSP Strategy S2	<p>Continue Seattle's Neighborhood Traffic Control Program.</p> <p>Consider requests from neighborhood organizations and citizens and consequently design and implement traffic circles and other neighborhood traffic control devices. These devices can be very effective to slow speeds and reduce collisions on neighborhood streets. In fact, to date, Seattle's traffic circles have resulted in a substantial reduction in accidents and speeds in neighborhoods. They can also encourage through traffic to stay on arterial streets, reducing the impact of cut through traffic on neighborhoods.</p>

6.5.3 Neighborhood Traffic Control Program Goals

Consistent with the direction in the Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Strategic Plan, the Neighborhood Traffic Control Program (NTCP) has established the following program goals:

- Traffic calming projects shall improve neighborhood livability in balance with transportation efficiency and the safety needs of the communities.
- The NTCP shall takes a holistic approach to traffic management, resulting in streets that provide access to neighborhood destinations for all modes, including walking, bicycling, transit and automobiles.
- Traffic calming devices shall complement the overall transportation network and not result in shifting the problem to an adjacent street.
- Traffic calming is not designed to address dangerous intersections, mitigate traffic noise, redesign the overall transportation and street classification system or effect a modal shift.

6.5.4 Considerations for Traffic Calming on All Streets

Although traffic calming is typically used on residential streets, there are certain tools that are appropriate for use on some arterial roadways. When a traffic calming approach is considered for any street, SDOT applies the following guidance:

- **Vehicle speed** is more critical than volume in terms of safety and should be addressed first where there are constraints.

- **Neighborhood involvement** is important to successful implementation. Rationale for traffic-calming and management measures should be explained clearly to community residents and installation of these treatments should incorporate public input.
- Traffic-calming and management measures should fit into, and preferably **enhance, the street environment**.
- Traffic-calming designs should be **predictable and easy to understand** by drivers and other users.
- **Devices that meet multiple goals** are usually more acceptable. For example, a raised crosswalk may be more understandable to motorists than a speed hump. The former has a clear goal, whereas the latter may be perceived as a nuisance.
- **Treatments need to be well designed** and based on current available information on their applications and effects. Information on U.S. experiences with various traffic-calming measures can be found in [ITE's Traffic Calming: State of the Practice](#).
- Devices should **accommodate emergency vehicles**. Emergency response times shall be considered.
- Traffic-calming areas or facilities should be **adequately signed, marked, and lit** to be visible to motorists.
- **Treatments need to be spaced appropriately to have the desired effect on speed**—too far apart and they will have a limited effect, too close and they will be an unnecessary cost and annoyance. Devices usually need to be spaced about 300 to 500 feet apart. If they are spaced too far apart, motorists may speed up between them. This is particularly the case where the devices are added onto the street (e.g., speed humps).
- **Whole street designs** are usually able to create an environment that supports slower speeds for the entire length.
- **Facilities should not be under-designed or they will not work**. Keeping the slopes too gradual for a speed table or curves too gentle for a chicane will not solve the problem and will appear as a waste of money and may ruin chances for future projects.
- Traffic-calming measures should **accommodate bicyclists, pedestrians and people with disabilities**.
- If a measure is likely to divert traffic onto another local street, **the area-wide street system should be considered** so as not to shift the problem from one place to another.
- Devices should be thought of as **elements of a traffic calming system** and be placed to improve pedestrian conditions throughout an area.

6.5.5 Additional Considerations for Traffic Calming on Arterial Streets

Seattle has streets within the arterial network that are primarily residential and are optimally used as routes to “collect” local traffic to move it to higher capacity arterial streets. Since Seattle’s street grid is largely built and congestion continues to increase, collector arterials are being used as cut-through routes by motorists trying to avoid congestion. Communities are concerned about higher traffic speeds and volumes on the collector arterials in their residential neighborhoods and are requesting traffic calming solutions. In order to balance the demands placed on the arterial network, including use by large vehicles such as buses, trucks and emergency responders, with neighborhood concerns, the City needs clear policy direction about traffic calming practices appropriate on arterial roadways.

1. Traffic calming on arterials is most successful when applied on arterial streets where adjacent land uses are primarily residential.
2. SDOT will attempt to resolve the issue using the following approaches: 1) education; 2) enforcement, and if education and enforcement do not solve the problem; and 3) engineering methods. If traffic calming devices are an appropriate solution, they shall be planned and designed in keeping with sound engineering and planning practices appropriate to the particular functions of the arterial street.
3. Through traffic should be encouraged to use higher-classification arterials (principal and minor

- arterials), as designated in Seattle's Street Classifications.
4. Emergency vehicle access shall be maintained and traffic calming devices should not unreasonably degrade emergency vehicle response times.
 5. Arterial traffic calming projects should not significantly impact transit service access, safety, and scheduling.
 6. Pedestrian and bicycle movement should be given equal consideration with vehicle movement in the design and implementation of arterial traffic calming projects.
 7. Parking issues should be considered on a project-by-project basis. Parking needs of residents should be balanced with the equally important functions of traffic, emergency vehicle access, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian movement.
 8. Traffic calming on arterials should not divert traffic to non-arterial roadways through the use of traffic diversion devices.
 9. When arterial traffic calming is being considered, certain procedures should be followed by SDOT in processing traffic management proposals in accordance with applicable codes and related policies and within the limits of available resources. At a minimum, the procedures should provide for project selection and evaluation; citizen participation in plan development and evaluation; public and life safety review, and communication of any test results and specific findings to area residents and affected neighborhood organizations.

6.5.6 Typical Traffic Calming Devices in Seattle

The City of Seattle has used the following traffic calming devices in locations deemed appropriate by the City Engineer in consultation with neighborhoods. Refer to the City of Seattle [Making Streets that Work](#) guide.

Not all traffic calming devices are appropriate for use on every type of street or in every location. [Traffic Calming Device and Applications](#) (table below) describes the name of the device, the type of issue it is typically used to resolve, and the street classification(s) where the device could be applied. The "typical use" category describes, in general, what kind of change each device can affect: managing traffic, conditions along streets, or pedestrian crossing conditions:

Managing traffic: Concerns about traffic speed and volume can be addressed through effective traffic management. The following devices are used to help manage traffic. Many of these devices restrict the movement of traffic on streets. In most cases the least restrictive method of solving a traffic management problem is the most cost effective, and the easiest for all to agree on.

Conditions along streets: Conditions along streets affect pedestrian travel, comfort, orientation, safety, and affect the aesthetic quality of our streets. This group of traffic calming devices includes on-street parking, lighting, street furniture, and plantings and trees.

Pedestrian crossing conditions: Crossing a street shouldn't be unreasonably difficult, and there are devices that can help improve pedestrian safety, including pedestrian crossings.

Traffic Calming Devices and Applications

Traffic Calming Device	Typical Use	Residential Streets (non-arterial)	Collector Arterials	Minor Arterials	Principal Arterials
Curb bulbs	Pedestrian Crossing Conditions	?	?	?	?
On-street parking (parallel and angle)	Conditions Along Streets	?	?	?	?
Streetscape	Conditions Along	?	?	?	?

improvements (street trees, lighting, street furniture, special paving treatments)	Streets				
Signs	Managing Traffic	?	?	?	?
Crossing islands or short medians	Pedestrian Crossing Conditions		?	?	?
Medians	Managing Traffic		?	?	?
“Road Diets” (reducing number of travel lanes)	Managing Traffic		?	?	??
Speed cushions (for 25 mph or below)	Managing Traffic	??	?	??	
Gateway treatments	Pedestrian Crossing Conditions	?	?		
Neighborhood speed watch program	Managing Traffic	?	?		
Limited access	Managing Traffic	?	?		
All-way stop	Managing Traffic	?	?		
Raised crosswalks	Pedestrian Crossing Conditions		?		
Raised intersections	Managing Traffic		?		
Speed limit reduction	Managing Traffic		?		
Chicanes	Managing Traffic	?			
Chokers	Managing Traffic	?			
Diverter	Managing Traffic	?			
Partial street closure	Managing Traffic	?			
Pedestrian districts	Pedestrian Crossing Conditions	?			
Speed humps	Managing Traffic	?			
Traffic circles	Managing Traffic	?			

Legend

Appropriate for Consideration (?)

May be Applicable (??)

6.5.7 Process for Installing Traffic Calming

SDOT has an evaluation process for all traffic calming proposals. Refer to [Figure 6-12: Traffic Calming Evaluation Process](#) [395 kb]. This process is necessary due to the high demand and limited resources available for traffic calming projects. This section outlines the steps that must be completed before a location may be considered eligible for traffic calming. Note: locations with physical characteristics that do not allow the feasible placement of traffic calming will not be considered.

Step 1: Community Contacts SDOT with Traffic Calming Proposal

SDOT requires support from the residents of the affected area before constructing traffic calming devices. Responsibility for demonstrating community support for a traffic calming completion of this step lies with the community. To initiate the NTCP process, a community group must contact SDOT NTCP to request inclusion in the annual NTCP evaluation period. Refer to [Section 6.6 Contact Information](#) for more information. All requests should be made prior to July 15; any request received after this date will be considered for funding in June of the following year.

Step 2: SDOT Evaluation of Community Request and Initial Action

SDOT staff will work with NTCP applicants to determine conditions on the street that the community believes need to change. After initial evaluation, the SDOT Traffic Engineer may authorize actions be taken within the scope of his or her authority to address the applicant's concern and solve the problem. If problem persists, SDOT may initiate education and enforcement activities to resolve the problem. The SDOT NTCP staff, in consultation with the Fire Department and King County/Metro Transit, may also deem the project to be infeasible at this point and recommend another course of action that does not involve traffic calming.

SDOT will evaluate the safety record of each location which can include collision history, speed data emergency response implications, and traffic volume counts. The data will be used to prioritize the locations for construction using the point criteria described in [Section 6.5.8 Point Criteria for Traffic Calming Project Ranking](#).

Step 3: Petition Process

If the problem is not successfully resolved in Step 2, SDOT will request a demonstration of community support for traffic calming. SDOT will provide the applicant with an NTCP petition and signatures must be gathered as follows:

- **Traffic Calming on a Residential Street:** Signatures are required from at least 60% of the households (owners or renters) and businesses (property or business owner) typically within one block of the proposed traffic calming device. For more restrictive traffic calming devices (e.g., diverters or partial closures) SDOT may specify a petition area beyond one block.
- **Traffic Calming on an Arterial Street:** Arterial roadways play a major role in moving people and goods within neighborhoods as well as throughout the city. For this reason, any traffic calming proposal on an arterial street must be supported by adjacent neighborhoods. In addition to the petition process defined above, additional letters of support will be requested from the community councils adjacent to arterial locations being considered for traffic calming, as well as the appropriate district council.

Only one signature per household or business is needed. Signed petitions must be submitted by July 15, to be considered for the following year's construction. Completed petitions can be mailed or delivered to the [Seattle Department of Transportation](#). Projects that meet the required support rate will be considered for funding through an SDOT annual program.

Step 4: SDOT and Community Seek Funding for Project

If the location does not qualify for funding through SDOT's NTCP program, the contact person listed on the petition will be notified by mail. Information about other potential funding sources may be provided. If the location ranks sufficiently high on SDOT's prioritization list for Neighborhood Traffic Control Program (NTCP) funding, the contact person will be notified.

At this point in the process, SDOT staff will determine if it is necessary to hold a meeting in the neighborhood to discuss the project, including results of the traffic analysis, the design concept, and the procedures leading up to construction. Maintenance of landscaping in traffic calming devices, an important component of this project, and identification of a landscape volunteer will also be discussed during the meeting. For traffic calming on arterial streets, meeting notices will be sent to the community councils in adjacent neighborhoods as well as the appropriate district council.

Step 5: Project Funded

Project funding is identified and SDOT proceeds with the design and construction process.

Step 6: Design & Construction Overview

Traffic calming devices are designed according to the existing geometry of each intersection and sized

to accommodate the passage of emergency vehicles. The Fire Department, Metro/King County Transit and other agencies review locations for new calming and may conduct a field test to check for maneuverability. Then, final plans are made and sent to construction crews with specifications. If a volunteer signs up to maintain plantings, soil and plants will be supplied; otherwise, the device will be covered in asphalt.

Step 7: Construction

The first visible evidence that traffic calming devices will be built is typically an outline of the device drawn in on the street. Construction will follow, including any landscaping and signs (e.g., reflector or directional signs).

Step 8: Post Construction Monitoring

After construction of speed humps, speed cushions and chicanes, the traffic calming device will be monitored for a period of six months to one year. During this time, traffic speeds and volumes are measured to help determine the effectiveness of the device.

6.5.8 Point Criteria for Traffic Calming Project Ranking

SDOT ranks locations for traffic calming based on a number of criteria. For traffic circles, a point criteria is used to assign points to an intersection for accident history, traffic volumes and traffic speeds refer to point values in tables include in [Section 6.5.8a Accident History](#), [6.5.8b Traffic Volumes](#) and [6.5.8c Traffic Speeds](#)). The points assigned for accident history, traffic speeds and traffic volumes are then added together to prioritize the location based on need.

To address traffic calming requests at mid-block locations, SDOT evaluates each corridor based on number and type of mid-block collisions, speeds and volumes.

6.5.8a Accident History

Accident history is determined based on the average number of accidents per year over the most recent 3 year period. The annual accident rate is determined by the number of accidents/number of years over which they occurred. For example if a location has had 6 collisions in the last 3 years, the average annual rate per year is 2.000. As a result, 4 points would be assigned to this location for accident history.

Points	Annual Accident Rate (accidents/year) at Intersection
1	0.5 - 0.875
2	0.876 - 1.250
3	1.251 - 1.625
4	1.626 - 2.000
5	2.001 - 2.375
6	2.376 - 2.750

For midblock locations, a score of .5 is assigned if the accidents on the midblock section of street exceed two accidents per year over the last three years.

6.5.8b Traffic Volumes

Points for traffic volumes are assigned according to the number of vehicles per day on an average weekday.

Points	Traffic Volumes (Vehicles per Day—Average Weekday Traffic)		
	Residential Streets	Collector Arterial	Minor/Principal Arterial
0.5	500 - 1100	500 - 1500	2000 - 4000

1.0	1101 - 1700	1501 - 3000	4000 - 8000
1.5	1701 - 2300	3001 - 4000	8000 – 12,000
2.0	2300+	4000+	12,000+

6.5.8c Traffic Speeds

Points for traffic speeds are allocated based on the 85th percentile speed in miles per hour. The 85th percentile speed is the speed at which 85% of the vehicles are traveling at or below. Speed limits for residential streets are 25 miles per hour, unless otherwise marked. Speed limits for arterial streets are 30 miles per hour unless otherwise marked.

Points	Traffic Speeds (85th Percentile Speed—miles per hour)	
	Residential Streets	Collector/Minor/ Principal Arterial
0.5	26 - 29	31 - 33
1.0	29.1 - 32	33.1 - 36
1.5	32.1 - 35	36.1 - 39
2.0	35.1+	39.1+

6.5.9 Trials and Temporary Installations for Traffic Calming

In neighborhoods trying traffic calming for the first time, it may be useful to lay out a new design with cones or temporary markings to test it. This provides emergency vehicle drivers, residents, and others with an opportunity to test the design. Some communities have constructed elaborate temporary devices with concrete or plastic (“jersey”) barriers. These can instill a negative reaction in the community due to their unaesthetic appearance and they do not generally have any significant benefits over the simpler test devices.

6.5.10 Landscaping for Traffic Calming Devices

Neighbors are responsible for the planting and maintenance of traffic calming devices after they are built. Landscaping is installed during the planting season (spring or fall). [SDOT's Urban Forestry Division](#) staff, takes input from residents about plant material selection during the months of January and June, depending on the season when construction is completed. Plants are chosen based on their drought tolerance, resistance to occasional car traffic and street right-of-way landscaping guidelines, which promote visibility. The [recommended street right-of-way plant list](#) contains a variety of suitable plants that have performed well in the past. Plants are delivered to the home of the landscape coordinator in the spring or fall and a planting party usually follows.

Residents are responsible for the [maintenance](#) of traffic circle plantings. Replacement plants are not typically available through the NTCP if the originals die due to neglect or automobile run-overs. Funding for vegetation rehabilitation is available through the [Department of Neighborhoods](#). View more information on traffic calming and landscaping through the on-line version of [The Neighbors' Gardening Circular \(Traffic Circle Newsletter\)](#). Also view resource information on [Salmon Friendly Gardening Tips from Seattle Public Utilities](#).

6.5.10a Plants Provided at the Time of Installation

Each year SDOT provides plants for between 60 to 120 new traffic circles, chicanes, triangles and medians. Purchases are made in bulk to keep costs down, so this requires selecting a common plant pallet that accommodates the needs of everyone. Although every effort is made to get the plants neighborhood groups request we sometimes need to make substitutions. As always, purchasing depends upon plant availability. So, we ask for flexibility and patience as we are serving a considerable number of neighborhood groups.

Groups may purchase their own plant material if they would like to plant sooner or have specialty plants

in mind that we might not be able to get. SDOT can not reimburse groups for these expenses, but your planting plan should be sent to SDOT Urban Forestry staff for permitting before plant purchases are made. Flower bulbs are not provided, but they are a lovely addition and we encourage you to plant them! Daffodils, in particular, grow really well. They need little care and will increase in number as they bloom each spring!

A traffic circle must be at least 14 feet in diameter to qualify for a tree. For a typical 16 foot diameter device we usually provide:

Type of Landscaping	Amount
Trees	1
Shrubs (no more than two different types)	4-5
Perennials (no more than three different types)	12
Flats of groundcover (one type)	2

All plant material and trees must be maintained consistent with City of Seattle Ordinance 4.03.010: Planting Strip and Landscaping and Paving. Multi-stemmed trees and shrubs that can grow tall, such as roses and lilacs are not acceptable. It is also advisable not to plant shrubs that require shearing. Usually the plants remain long after the person willing to consistently maintain them has left.

6.6 Contact Information

Organization Name/Website	Phone
Department of Planning and Development (DPD) General Information	
DPD City Design	(206) 684-0763
SDOT Major Projects Division: Integrating the Monorail	(206) 733-9271
SDOT Major Projects Division: Link Light Rail Team	(206) 684-4652
SDOT Neighborhood Traffic Control Program: Traffic Calming	
-North/NE/NW/Ballard	(206) 684-0817
- West/Central/East	(206) 684-0815
-South/SE/SW	(206) 684-7577
SDOT Street Use Division	(206) 684-5283
Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) General Information	
SPU Resource Planning Division, Natural Drainage Systems	(206) 615-0866

Additional contact information and resources are located in the [City of Seattle Staff Directory](#), which is searchable by Department, Division and individual staff.